Building the Good Life: The Politics of Sprawl in the Okanagan Valley

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2000

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ABSTRACT

Attempts to limit suburban sprawl by publicizing its social, economic, environmental, and health problems have not been effective. An important aspect of this ongoing appeal of sprawl is its promise of ideal community. The discourse of ideal community in advertisements for housing developments in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, echoes discursive constructions by Plato and Aristotle, Rousseau and Kant. Sprawl is therefore another attempt to solve a problem in political thought that originates with the *polis*, namely, how to envision, authorize, construct, and secure the best possible space, form, and practice of human organization. By constructing secure political community as the physical embodiment of metaphysical truth, a necessary but impossible resolution between nature and culture, this discourse constructs the central problem of politics as unsolvable. Thus the intractability of sprawl needs to be understood as a political problematic where the act of imposing a solution regenerates the original problem.

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1: INTRODUCTION

This is a story about a place that is part of me – a place I know so well that its smells, tastes, sights, and sounds, its very feel, stays with me when I am not there. It is a place that is changing rapidly, growing in all directions. Some people fully support these changes, as they believe they bring them closer to their dream of the good life. Others find these changes problematic, some because they disagree with the particular vision of the good life, and some because they deeply desire this vision yet feel excluded from it.

In this story about the appeal of suburban development in the Okanagan Valley, there are many problems, ranging from the problematic impacts of suburban sprawl, to the problems of trying to analyze suburban sprawl with idealized concepts of nature and culture, to the problems of presenting solutions to sprawl that reproduce the problems that suburban development was meant to fix. These problems can be described, analyzed, and thus constructed according to a number of narratives; the one I am interested in traces a link between these more readily-apparent problems and a long-standing problem in political thought, namely, how to envision, construct, and secure the ideal community as the best possible space, form, and practice of human organization. In order to trace these links, this story will move between descriptions of the ideal Okanagan community as presented by real estate advertisements, and theoretical descriptions of ideal community presented by writers such as Plato and Aristotle, Rousseau and Kant. It is a story in which the problem of politics is constructed as the tension between fascination with human reason and fear of human mortality. It is a story about problems and solutions, and ultimately about a political problem with no easy solution.

2: THE OKANAGAN VALLEY

You can approach the Okanagan Valley from several directions. Driving from Vancouver, the closest major city, you will travel approximately 400 kilometres to the north-east, through the steep, damp green mountains of the coast range, through the steep, grey gorge of the Fraser River Valley and the Lillooet Mountain Range or the steep, grey granite peaks of the Coquihalla summit, and down into the wide open grasslands of the Nicola Valley. From the Nicola Valley you can climb back into high rangeland and forests and descend far too quickly into the very centre of the Okanagan Valley, taking a sharp curve that brings the long narrow flash of Okanagan Lake and the long flat spread of the city of Kelowna into view. This is the centre of the valley, where the lake narrows and bends along the jut of rock that is Okanagan Mountain Park. In the summer of 2003, this park became known across Canada as the site of a forest fire that evacuated 27,000 people, burned 25,000 hectares[1] of forest and park land, and destroyed 239 houses on the southern fringe of the city. This narrow bend in the lake is the only place where you can cross by car, on the floating bridge that connects the Westside and the small community of Westbank to Kelowna on the east shore. You can choose to skirt the punishing summit climb into the central Okanagan by traveling north along the flat grassy plains until you reach Kamloops, another low, dusty city extending horizontally out from the banks of the Thompson River. A north-east turn from Kamloops will take you to Chase, Sorrento, and Salmon Arm – greener, more wooded communities at the northern limit of the Okanagan Valley – while a south-east turn will take you through Monte Lake, past the giant Canada flag on the hill north of Falkland, and into the small North Okanagan city of Vernon.

From Vancouver you can also choose to travel due east, through the dense green-black of Manning Provincial Park, up and down into the parched little town of Princeton, and then along the Similkameen River – stopping always in the height of summer to swim in the clear still waters at Bromley Rock – until you arrive into the steep scree slopes, rolling green farms and orchards, and golden grassy hillsides of the South Okanagan and the communities of Keremeos, Oliver, Osoyoos, Okanagan Falls, and Penticton.

If you were driving from Calgary, you would strike a sharply south-west diagonal, find Rogers Pass a surprising cut through the year-round white peaks of the Rocky Mountains, brake constantly through the winding descent into Golden, and then slowly watch the mountains melt into hills, the hills melt into slopes, the slopes melt into the octopus arms and dark waters of Shuswap Lake. You would pass Sicamous, the green fields and lazy river eddies of Grindrod, and the Starlight Drive-In in Enderby, the last drive-in movie theatre in the Okanagan. Finally, about six hours from Calgary, you arrive in Vernon, whose drive-in movie theatre has long-since been redeveloped as a retirement community. Although small, Vernon is the main city of the North Okanagan Regional District. It sits nestled in a surround of hills, between the northern tip of Okanagan Lake on the west, brilliant blue-green Kalamalka Lake on the south, and Swan Lake on the north, whose name is misleadingly beautiful.

Less common is the approach from the Kootenays, a slow circuitous route where you leave narrow treed valleys and quiet communities, travel north to the natural hotsprings of Nakusp, and curve back south to the cable ferry that crosses Lower Arrow Lake. On the west side of the lake you turn north until you reach Fauquier, then due west

through the Monashee Mountains, until you reach Cherryville, Lumby, Lavington, and finally Vernon. This narrow winding highway should be driven carefully at night, when there are often deer on the road.

Of course, you can arrive on flights that carry you over the mountain passes, ranch land, and forests – forests once plentiful, but visibly decreasing due to logging and the red stain of the pine beetle. The major hub is Kelowna Airport, but more and more flights connect Vernon and Penticton to other cities throughout the province and western Canada. Once a quiet, out-of-the-way agricultural region, the valley is increasingly linked by smooth, wide highways to major cities throughout western Canada, and by frequent flights to cities across North America.

This valley and the 111 kilometre-long lake that fills it is named Okanagan after the First Nations who called the region *S-Ookanhkchinx*, which translates from the syilx language into "transport toward the head or top end." The Okanagan Nation Alliance describes this as a reference to the traditional territory of the Okanagan Nations: they traveled the waterways from the north end of Okanagan Lake at what is now Vernon, past the sharp bend at what is now Kelowna, to the south end of the lake at Penticton. They followed the Okanagan River as it flows south from Penticton, through Okanagan Falls, and into Washington State, until it merges with the Columbia River. The valley is unique in Canada for its semi-arid climatic conditions, which give the region hot dry summers and moderately cold, snowy winters. It has several large freshwater lakes and a few smaller streams, grasslands of bluebunch wheatgrass with sage, rabbit-bush and antelope-bush, and high open hillsides treed mainly with Ponderosa pines, as open and dry as the landscape itself.

In the spring, these hillsides are covered in the rich gold blooms of the Balsam Root flower, whose brown centres smell of synthetic hot chocolate powder, and the bluey-lavender spikes of wild lupines. This is the time to be wary of ticks in the grass, which embed themselves under your skin and carry the risk of Lyme disease. Later, the hillsides will be covered with the sweet white blooms of the Saskatoon bushes, which as the summer progresses yield deep indigo berries, disappointingly mealy compared to blueberries. As the summer temperatures climb to forty degrees Celsius, the greenery retreats and gives way to sage and tumble weeds, to the nasty barbed heads of Russian Nettle that tear at bear skin, and to the small hidden clusters of Prickly Pear cactus whose spikes are easily embedded in misplaced hands or feet. This is the time to be wary of rattlesnakes, sunning themselves on the same rocks or unused backroads that you are likely to walk or bike along. Their bite is poisonous, painful but rarely fatal for adults.

Late summer brings a golden glow to the valley, as the sun hangs lower in the sky and shines sideways through blades of ripening grass. In the hills, the dirt reduces to a fine dust and the Ponderosa pine needles bake in the endless sun. The mullein spikes, tall as your eyes, are spent and drying. The leaves of willows, aspen, and cottonwood turn golden and begin to dry. As the days go by and the wild berries ripen, it is important to watch for bears, who come down out of the hills to fatten before winter.

During winter, clouds settle into the groove of the valley, holding a low grey cover for days on end. The particular geography of the long lake enclosed by hills and small mountains creates a thermal inversion that keeps moisture trapped in the valley. Look north to south, and the clouds seem to have engulfed the world, a stratus affliction that seems a contemporary version of the biblical forty days of rain. Travel a few minutes

on any road that leads east or west out of the valley, or drive high enough into the surrounding hills, and you will be released into glorious blue sunshine once again. The hillsides receive intermittent covers of snow until late in the winter, when the blanket settles in earnest. Snowshoeing or cross-country skiing, you will see lodgepole pine, spruce, and Douglas fir trees weighed down by snow to narrow spikes. The deciduous trees and bushes – Saskatoon bushes, trembling aspen, and paper birch – form grey lacy silhouettes against the low-lying light, and the last remaining berries and shoots provide winter foraging for such birds as Clark's Nutcracker and the Pygmy Nuthatch, for White-tailed and Mule deer, and for coyote.

The first significant spread of non-indigenous pioneers into this valley occurred in the mid-1800s, as British settlers began to establish large cattle ranches, taking advantage of the natural grasslands. Fruit trees were planted initially to support ranch owners and staff, but by the 1860s some pioneers were planting orchards as a primary focus. The first irrigated orchard was constructed in the 1880s near Peachland. Through the turn of the century, pioneering was closely related to ranching and orcharding, and both were primarily pursued by wealthy British settlers, as the start-up costs for both ventures were significant. The orchard industry in particular depended on low-cost labour for planting, pruning, and especially harvesting, a demand met by a succession of non-British communities. From the late 1880s through to the early 1990s, Indigenous peoples supplied most orchard labour, initially by the Nez Perce who followed their traditional migration route north from Washington State, and later by the Salish Nation and the Okanagan tribes. Studies of newspapers and other archival material show that other significant populations that made the orchard industry possible included Chinese (who

arrived in the Okanagan in the early 1900s while building the railways), Japanese (during World War II, not as voluntary migrants but through forced internment programs), Doukhobors (during World War II, when as pacifists they refused to join the war), and Portuguese (in the 1950s and 1960s), (Lanthier and Wong, n.d.: 1). Orchards continue to rely on low-cost labour, and in recent years this demand has been filled by young Quebecois and Quebecoise workers, who spend the summers camping and picking. There are also frequent discussions about developing special short-term work permits to allow Mexican labourers to move temporarily to the Okanagan during fruit harvests.

By the early 1900s, the Okanagan nations were displaced onto government-delineated reserves, though no treaties were ever signed. The culture and economy of the valley became increasingly connected to the farms, ranches, and orchards that the pioneers cultivated. This history is celebrated in an ode to pioneers that was recently erected at the lookout on the summit of Knox Mountain Park in Kelowna. The plaque briefly references the indigenous inhabitants, and then moves quickly to laud the hard work of the pioneers, especially the often-unrecognized pioneer women, whose efforts made the valley region "livable." From this lookout, part of a 235 hectare park of Ponderosa pine forest and grassland, you can look south over Kelowna, across the lake to Westbank and Westside Road, north along the lake, and east to the satellite communities of Rutland, Mission, Crawford, and others. The signs of a working landscape are plentiful, from the log booms on the lake at the base of Knox Mountain, to the artificially green stretches of irrigated fields and orchards, to the snaking lines of vineyards following the south-facing hillside curves. While you cannot see them from this distance, many of the seemingly barren hillsides are traced with old, disused irrigation flumes, now

over-grown with moss and plants and used mainly as walking trails; these early irrigation efforts were essential to transforming the uniformly dry environment into the agricultural landscape that is now synonymous with the Okanagan.

While orchards are still an important, even iconic, industry within the Okanagan, over the past century the economy of the valley has become more diversified. Major industrial sectors include forestry and construction, and with the growing population base, the public sector provides employment to many. Vineyards have become a second high-value agricultural undertaking, with Okanagan Valley wines winning awards world-wide. The enormous increase in tourism over the past 50 years has made the service industry another crucial source of economic income and employment.

Increasingly, the Okanagan Valley has become popular not only for its agricultural production and economic opportunities, but for the elusive "quality of life" that the climate and geography provides. The region offers a mix of cultural amenities, long hours of summer sunshine and predictable winter snow that make outdoor activities possible year-round, and a local economy varied enough to hold the prospect of work for many. The region is desirable enough to have spawned a phenomenon known locally as the "sunshine tax," referring to the lower wages people are willing to accept to live in this climate and landscape. Young families come from larger cities for the possibility of owning grander houses on private lots in an environment perceived to be more safe and natural, spurring the growth of single-family dwellings that spread out further and further from city centres. Retirees come for the milder climate and smaller cities, spurring the growth of adult-only communities and golf courses. Such is the desirability of life in the Okanagan that advertisements for real estate and development opportunities in the valley

can be found in the newspapers of major cities throughout western Canada, including full-page ads in the main section of the B.C. edition of *The Globe and Mail*. These ads emphasize the beautiful lakes and hillsides, the perfect summer weather, the year-round recreational activities, and the proximity to other urban centres.

In the past thirty years, this growing popularity has translated into a rapidly growing population. Kelowna alone, the biggest city in the valley and the heart of the Central Okanagan Region District, grew from 53,190 in 1976 to 63,369 in 1986, to 92,859 in 1996, and to 109,490 by 2005. Thus the population more than doubled in the span of 30 years, a pace of growth that is among the highest in Canada. The growth is expected to continue, with one source estimating a total population of 153,000 by the year 2020 (Smart Growth BC, 2004: 40). Other cities and towns in the Valley region have experienced similar, if slightly less dramatic, growth patterns. Vernon, the centre of the North Okanagan Regional district, grew from 17,984 in 1976, to 20,965 in 1986, to 32,993 in 1996, to 36,232 in 2005, which again is a doubling of population (though the change is difficult to evaluate, as census boundaries continually changed through this period). In the same period, Penticton, the main city in the South Okanagan Regional District, grew from 21,837 in 1976 to 33,061 in 2005. In all, the total population of the North, Central, and South Okanagan Regional Districts in 1976 was 173,592. By 2005, the total population of the same region had grown to 331,447 (a growth factor of 1.90). To put this in context, the population of the province of BC in the same period went from 2,533,791 to 4,254,522 (a growth factor of 1.68).[2]

This rapid population growth is putting stress on the land and water resources of the region. The Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (CCEA) notes about the region

that "[u]rbanization and industrialization have placed increased pressures on both the quantity and quality of water supplies. Shortages are now common in parts of the Okanagan and Thompson basins, particularly in summer when demand is high but runoff low" (CCEA, n.d.). Further, according to a Smart Growth BC case study of Kelowna, from 1994 to 2004 approximately 2200 hectares of greenfield land[3] were built over and converted to urban uses to accommodate this growth in population. The hillsides, often steep and rocky and therefore not arable, are usually not part of the Agricultural Land Reserve,[4] and so while valued for their ecological, recreational, and aesthetic properties, they are often the easiest place to locate new developments. According to the Smart Growth report, for these reasons approximately 1,465 hectares of development has taken place on hillsides. Further, because of pressures to keep current ALR land designations, rising prices close to the city centre, an ongoing dislike of downtown residents for increased densities, and a minimum of other available space, "most of the anticipated population growth over the next two decades will be accommodated in hillside areas" (Smart Growth BC, 2004: 44). Another important source of land for accommodating the influx of new residents has been found in the smaller communities near Kelowna, particularly the unincorporated area west of Kelowna, on the other side of Okanagan Lake. This growth adds stress to the local road and highway networks, particularly the fixed width of Okanagan Lake Bridge,[5] from the increase in commuter traffic.

The dramatic population growth of Kelowna, Vernon, and the rest of the Okanagan Valley has been matched by the spread of new residential developments to house the increased population.[6] In Kelowna, new developments do include multi-family dwellings of higher density, and closer to the established urban cores. However, the most

characteristic form of this growth is an increase in new subdivisions and community developments. A significant number of new residential units in Kelowna and throughout the valley take the form of single-family dwellings in suburban neighbourhoods at or beyond the fringes of the developed urban environment, often in areas with no or infrequent public transportation service.[7] It is clear from looking at maps of development in the region, or from driving through the same cities and communities year after year, that the population growth being experienced by the valley is being housed further and further from established urban centres. Hillsides of Ponderosa pine and Balsam Root, rattlesnakes and deer, are being covered with the dark vacant eyes of windows set in multi-story single-family houses, and distinct communities bleed into one another along what used to be quiet country backroads. For many residents and analysts, the Okanagan Valley is becoming an exemplar of suburban sprawl.

3: THE PHENOMENON OF SPRAWL

While the definition of sprawl, the identification of instances of sprawl, and the explanations for why sprawl happens are all contested, the most common definitions of suburban sprawl focus on the spread of urban residential development into the non-urban, undeveloped, or sparsely developed land in the vicinity, in a form that is of lower density than its own urban centres. The term sprawl is used to encompass the building forms commonly labelled 'suburban' (large tracts of single-family dwellings on limited lots) and 'exurban' (larger lot sizes and larger houses with a more rural appearance, located on the fringe or in rural or farming areas, but without necessarily being tied to economic use of the land). Additional features that are used to define and characterize developments as sprawl include automobile dependence, separation of single-use buildings and single-family dwellings, strip malls, and often a minimum of public open space (Gillham, 2002: 23). The phenomenon of sprawl often includes the tendency towards "peripheral growth," developments that are built up not on the existing edge but in more isolated areas, which then encourage in-filling over time and add pressure to remaining farm land or open spaces (Burchell et al. 2005: 13). According to this generalized definition, many developments occurring within the Okanagan region can be considered examples of sprawl.

Sprawl is driven in part by the decisions of residents,[8] who are motivated by desires for land (whether because it is cheap or because you can buy larger, more rural or "natural" settings), safe living, a good place to raise children, and a less dense, busy, urban prospect. The immediate benefits of sprawl include reduced expense to the family

or individual due to reduced cost of building further from city centres, the perceived personal and social gains derived from home-ownership, particularly larger single-family dwellings with yards, and the peace of mind associated with a sense of safety and lower crime rates (Burchell et al., 2005: 8, 127-131). Sprawl brings short-term benefits not only to residents, but also to the companies that finance, plan, and build these developments. Because suburban and exurban developments have become a familiar form of residential housing in North America, further such developments are low-risk investments that are easy and attractive to developers (Burchell et al., 2005: 71-72). Others note the particular link between the suburb and the desire to live in a more "natural" environment: sprawling developments are often located in more park-like settings and feature more greenery, if only from the ubiquitous front lawn. This "unspoiled land at the urban fringe" has consistently been a key element in drawing residents out of the city centres or in from the isolated rural regions (Fishman, 2002: 27-28).

While "the suburb becomes visible almost as early as the city itself" (Mumford, 1961, quoted in Gillham, 2002: 25; see also Bruegmann, 2005: 21-31), most analysts link the origins of contemporary suburban sprawl to the dynamics of the industrial revolution, the urbanization that it spurred, the development of an economically and socially powerful middle class, and the subsequent attempts to solve the problems of urban over-crowding, filth, crime, and disease. Urban reforms tended to follow two paths: those that focused on improving conditions within existing city developments (such as the City Beautiful Movement), and those that implemented new visions of clean, safe, quiet living outside the city core (such as Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities) (Gillham, 2002: 25-26;

Parker, 2004: 53-55, 82-83). The modern era of expansive suburban development was further enabled by advancements in transportation and communication technology, by changes in social forms and roles of the family, by development of industrial construction techniques, by specific local or national government policies, and by a general increase in public affluence and consumer power (Bruegmann, 2005: 13).

Sprawl is more commonly defined and analyzed as a North American (and to some extent British) phenomenon rather than a northern European one.[9] This is due in part to historical conditions of lower land prices, more space, less government planning, and a lack of tight building regulations (Parker, 2004: 65). It is also in part due to the specific frontier settlement history of North America, where building and developing was a preferred Lockean means of claiming ownership, civilization, and sovereignty in contested new territory. Indeed, even now, sprawl is frequently linked to the frontier mythology of North America, either directly, as in the statement that "sprawl is akin to the frontier of long ago" (Burchell et al., 2005: 12), or as an inversion, such as the tendency to describe the process of gentrifying decaying urban centres as "the new urban frontier" (Smith, 2002: 262).

Sprawl as an analytical term therefore characterizes a form of suburban development that, even though it creates or exacerbates a number of serious problems, has become dominant in North America.[10] It creates negative economic impacts, such as the demonstrated problem (more common in established industrial cities, especially in the U.S.) of hollowing out city centres, and the expense of extending utility services such as water, sewer, gas, and electricity over ever-greater distances. It turns arable or environmentally sensitive land into spreading housing developments, restricting other

economic uses of the land, restricting the movement of wildlife along corridors, and restricting the availability of outdoor recreation. It causes other ecological damage, such as loss of local wildlife species, loss of trees (which in turn reduces local carbon sequestering), and reductions in rainwater filtering and storage due to additional non-permeable surfaces. Because one of the main features of sprawling developments is that they feature larger single-family dwellings on individual lots, this building form leads to more resource use, as the houses are larger and less economical than multi-family dwellings and the developments themselves spread further apart. This further contributes to energy consumption, greenhouse gas emission, and global warming, as bigger houses require more heating and lighting and longer distances require more transportation, usually by private vehicle. There are demonstrated connections between suburban sprawl and the experience of social isolation for those who live within the community and the social exclusion of different economic, cultural, or ethnic groups (Gillham, 2002: 132-142). And most recently, suburban sprawl has also been linked to serious health problems in North America, particularly the increases in asthma (linked to the increased air pollution from excessive vehicle use) and rising rates of obesity (linked to the limited ability to walk or bike to work, school, or commercial centres) (Frumkin et al., 2004).

These problems influence or affect immediate residents of the urban centre and its suburbs, such as the children in all areas of a city developing asthma because of increased car traffic from commuters. However, they also affect many other people and communities and their sense of their well-being, such as the rural residents and farmers who can no longer compete against rising house costs, or the resource-based communities whose possibilities are constrained by the economic forces of extraction, sale, and

transport of goods and building materials. Considering the wide range of serious problems noted above, the list of human and non-human effects would be long. Following traditional capitalist economic models, the effects usually are considered to be "externalities" or are considered to be unrelated at all. Yet as it becomes clear that these problems are not sustainable in the long term, more and more economists, environmentalists, urban planners, and politicians are attempting to solve the problems that sprawl creates.

These criticisms are not new, although they are becoming the subject of more wide-spread and intensive debate. In the American context, where post-war sprawl is often linked to the 1956 Federal Highway Act, suburban sprawl was being criticized as early as 1958 on many of the same counts as it is today:

> Sprawl is bad aesthetics; it is bad economics. Five acres is being made to do the work of one, and do it very poorly. This is bad for farmers, it is bad for communities, it is bad for industry, it is bad for utilities, it is bad for the railroads, it is bad for the recreation groups, it is even bad for the developers. (Whyte, 1958, quoted in Frumkin et al., 2004: 2)

Despite clear links between sprawl and these numerous problems, despite increasing publicization of these problems, despite increasing claims by governments, communities, and developers to be approaching development differently, in many regions – including the Okanagan Valley – the majority of suburban development continues according to an ever-shifting, yet consistently spreading form of built community that can be described as sprawl.

4: THINKING SPRAWL AS A POLITICAL PROBLEM

The difficulty of addressing the problem of sprawl seems strange initially, as there are at least as many suggested or possible solutions to sprawl as there are ways to describe and analyze the problems that it generates. There seems to be a multiplicity of rational ways to consider the obvious aspects of this problem, a multiplicity of rational grounds upon which to start making changes, and a multiplicity of suggested solutions, examples and technologies available to alleviate the multiple problems. This multiplicity alerts us to the fact that the problem of sprawl is over-determined: it can be explained according to so many distinct, rational arguments that no one explanation alone, nor all together, is sufficient for understanding the problem. Further, while faced with so many rational arguments against its continuation, sprawling developments are still promoted as rational and normal; some academic analyses, such as Bruegmann's (2005), maintain that developments labeled as sprawl by detractors are still the best (most rational) choice, as evidenced by the fact that millions of people continue to choose to live there. The continued disagreement over the rationality of arguments for or against sprawl, and the tangled mess of over-determined, often contradictory claims that justify sprawl and oppose sprawl, suggests that the appeal of this form of development, and the analyses of it, operate at a level that is not entirely rational. Indeed, it suggests that the terrain of the "rational" is as contended as the terrain of sprawl itself. In turn, this suggests that responding to the problems of sprawl will require something more than educating the public to make better (more rational) choices, or lobbying governments to make better

(more rational) policies, or influencing developers to make better (more rational) developments.

This intransigence, this difficulty of understanding and addressing a problem that, on the surface, appears to have many possible routes to alleviation, makes it necessary to take a much closer look at the appeal of sprawl. There are many economic incentives, structural influences, and social pressures that encourage sprawl, as were noted in the previous section. However, even if one comes to some degree of understanding of the complex range of forces driving sprawl and the problems created by sprawl, an advertisement promising a fulfilling and happy life on a sunny hillside in the Okanagan, with views of a lake or an orchard, easy access to hiking or golf, and a quick drive into the town centre, can hold enormous affective appeal. We need to begin to look at the practices through which sprawl is normalized, how the initial affective appeal is made which can then allow particular choices to be rationalized. The features promoted in advertisements that sell lots or houses to the purchasing public, and the desires that these features tap into, are difficult to understand through existing analyses of sprawl. At the root of the features used to sell sprawl is a specific practice of evoking a sense of ideal community: these advertisements promote a particular claim regarding the communal good life, and in promoting this claim, they claim the authority to define the good life and the ability to build it for any who can afford it.

The language of the advertisements for sprawling suburban developments in the Okanagan Valley resonates at an uncanny frequency with the ancient Greek stories of ideal community as the *polis*, the self-sufficient and self-governing city, which is the founding image of politics in the Western tradition. In the analysis that follows, we will

read how the notion of ideal community is constructed by Plato in *The Republic* and Aristotle in *Politics*, looking at the problems of community, the solutions they suggest, and the terms within which these solutions are authorized. When we shift to read how the notion of ideal community is constructed in the contemporary Okanagan setting, through the language and images of real estate advertisements, we will see that many of the perceived problems, and the forms of the suggested solutions, are remarkably similar, though of course transposed into contemporary terms. This similarity suggests that there is a more fundamental set of political problems at the centre of the discourse of sprawl than is being recognized and questioned in other analyses of sprawl. These problems are at once practical and metaphysical, political and philosophical; they are the problems of the actual, material organization of human interaction and the abstract rationales and truth claims used to authorize some community spaces, forms, and practices over others. This is a set of problems that has consistently troubled thinking about politics in the West; it is a line of thinking first framed by Plato and Aristotle over two thousand years ago as a discourse of the *polis*, a line of thinking that is operative in the discourse of the modern state, and a line of thinking that we can see clearly repeated in the contemporary discourse of sprawl.

Plato and Aristotle present the *polis* as an ideal of human community troubled by three problems: how to structure human community to produce the good life; how to maintain this good life over time, when communities seem forever threatened with change and dissolution; and how to authorize or rationalize claims to the best form of organization. Their formulation of community in terms of these three problems, and their complicated solutions to these problems, depends upon conceptualizations of nature and

culture as distinct and in tension: both nature and culture are necessary to the constitution of the good life, but both pose fundamental threats to the possibility of successfully constituting the community. This story constructs a relationship between claims regarding nature and culture, on the one hand, and forms of community and forms of authority, on the other. While the concepts of nature and culture and the vision of ideal community all shift over time, this relationship remains remarkably consistent as a dominant framework within which politics has been thought in the West. In this story, politics functions simultaneously as the space, form, and practice of community that is said to arise from the successful resolution of the problems of community and authority, and as a claim to the capacity to solve these problems, and in so doing, to construct community according to the appropriate space, form, and practice.

This relationship between nature and culture, instability and security, community and authority, is produced as much through analyses and theories, descriptions and articulations, as through seemingly material or practical attempts to construct the community. It encompasses the built community, as in the neighbourhood or the city, and the conceptual community, as in the nation, or more recently the global village or the cyber-community. This is a relationship built of terms and concepts, images and reproductions, as much as houses, structures, or institutions. It is a relationship played out through discourse, and thus through all aspects of life. Indeed, the discursive practices that produce nature and culture and hold them in this peculiar relationship are inextricably linked to the discursive practices that make it so difficult to avoid formulations that oppose discourse to the material world, and that oppose rational to irrational or emotional.

Given that suburban sprawl in general, and in particular the continued development throughout the Okanagan Valley of sprawling suburban communities, presents the serious social, environmental, economic, and health problems noted in the previous section, an analysis of sprawl that attempts to place it within a long history of discursive constructions and reconstructions of ideal community might appear abstract, or worse, unhelpful. An analysis focussed on the continuities and discontinuities in these constructions and relationships is simultaneously an investigation of the way that sprawl has been enabled and of the modes of analysis that label sprawl as either rational or irrational, either a problem or a solution, as these claims and identifications are embedded within the same systems of verbal and visual production. It enables us to shift away from the formulation that sprawl is a problem that we need to solve, and instead encourages us to ask a different series of questions: For whom is it a problem? For whom is it rational or irrational? What forms does this problem take? What is at stake in the claim to be able to identify problems and solutions, rationality and irrationality?

A careful reading of the productions of ideal community within Plato and Aristotle, and within these advertisements for sprawling developments, can help us understand how discursive practices that have produced complicated relationships of necessity and incompatibility between nature and culture – and aligned with these, concepts of rural and urban, country-side and city, embodiment and rationality – are central to the continued construction of suburban sprawl. Sprawl therefore is a crucial political problem due to its relationship to concepts of the ideal community as the proper space, form, and practice of politics. It is also a crucial political problem through its constitution according to discursive practices, which at all times represent claims to the

authority to define appropriate content, to narrow allowable options, to normalize a mode of being, and to solidify a contingent formulation as normal, necessary, and inescapable. As Foucault often highlights, the authority to define and constrain is frequently derived from metaphysical claims. At the root of thinking about suburban sprawl as a political problem are the methods by which Plato and Aristotle base their authority to define the *polis*, the ideal political community, on a distinction drawn between metaphysical, essential, unchanging nature and variable, unstable, phenomenal nature. In their different ways, they derive their political authority from the claim to be able to impose a perceived metaphysical stability on human community, which is necessarily lived in the realm of physical instability.

This notion of the abstract versus the embodied is not itself an abstraction. As Richard Sennett demonstrates in *Flesh and Stone: the Body and the City in Western Civilization*, it has been worked out very concretely, as master-images of the idealized body that have been imposed through time on the built city, and concepts of the ideal political community that have been imposed through time on particular bodies (Sennett, 1994: 23-25). This distinction between the metaphysical and the physical, the idealized abstraction and the embodied particular, has been central to the perception of both the possibilities and the weaknesses of political community. The advertisements presented in this analysis repeat these distinctions. They suggest that stability of the community can be achieved through the materialization of the idealized home, the idealized neighbourhood development, as securable extensions of the physical body.

An important part of the ongoing appeal of sprawl can therefore only be understood according to the way that claims of what sprawling developments can offer

people resonate within this much larger discourse around notions of ideal community. Within this discourse, nature becomes the ultimate authority in making political claims, because it is claimed as a source of metaphysical stability; and yet it paradoxically becomes the ultimate form of depoliticization, because of the claim that politics is an effect of relating to nature in the correct manner. In parallel fashion, this discourse constructs culture as the necessary grounds of politics; and yet to label something as cultural is to depoliticize it, as only some forms of cultural spaces, forms, or practices are considered political. Finally, by reproducing this discourse of nature and culture, instability and security, the advertisements for sprawl invoke the authority present in the initial articulations of ideal community to enable and authorize a particular form of contemporary political community, even as they depoliticize their claims to authority.

Suburban sprawl is a curiously apolitical vision of the ideal political community not only because these claims to authority are depoliticized – this was the standard move within political thinking in the West, as critiqued by contemporary theorists such as Foucault – but also because the concept of community as the political structures that enable stable human interaction is missing. Ideal community, in the story of the *polis*, was inextricably linked to a claim regarding right politics, described and constructed in terms of nature and culture. The discourse of ideal community as suburban sprawl, while it does not explicitly locate itself in these terms, is similarly linked to a dominant line of thinking about politics that seeks to re-impose new spaces, forms, and practices of the *polis* over failing or problematic existing constructions. The original articulations of ideal community as the *polis*, in Plato and Aristotle, are reworked as time and circumstances

change: the *polis* that secures stable political community by resolving the tension between nature and culture re-appears, for example, as the idealized autonomous European city-state as articulated by Rousseau, and re-appears again as the early nation-state as theorized by Kant. These are clearly distinct from the original concept of the *polis*, relying as they do on developing modern concepts of individuality, sovereignty, and absolute space and time. Yet they can be read as using the conceptual bases of the *polis* to articulate and attempt to institute a renewed, secure political community in the face of change, decline, instability, or uncertainty. As we can see in the present challenges facing the security of particular states, and through them the concept of state sovereignty as the natural and necessary form of political community, this reliance on a conceptual resolution between nature and culture does not produce the sought-after stability.[11] How then can we now be attempting, yet again, to recreate the *polis*, to construct the ideal community in terms of nature and culture, but in a determinedly apolitical space, form, and practice? Why does this particular contemporary resolution between nature and culture, metaphysical and embodied, rural and urban, take the form of sprawl? What is different here, and what is the same?

Contemporary suburban sprawl is not the Greek *polis* in space, form, or practice; nor is it identical to earlier modern forms of political community. The readings that follow will highlight some of the differences in built and conceptual community that are promoted through the discourse of sprawl, such as the tension between accessibility and exclusivity, the significance of the house as an expression of desired immortality, and the specific spatial and temporal dimensions of the resolution between nature and culture as one between the rural and the urban, tradition and progress. However, what emerges

throughout these readings are a series of striking similarities. First, there is an ongoing emphasis on community as a construction. From Plato and Aristotle to advertisements for Highpointe, Wilden, and other contemporary developments in the Okanagan Valley, it is clear that the ideal community, while grounded in and justified by some vision of nature, requires a concerted process or practice of building. The community must be constituted, where this includes notions of determining its constitutive elements, constructing its physical and institutional forms, ensuring the well-being (healthy constitution) of the individual and the group, and establishing and securing its way of life. Second, the idealization of these forms of community has depended on a specific configuration of nature and culture that tries to materialize a perceived metaphysical stability. Within this configuration, the body is often synecdochic of the relationship between the human and idealized and demonized nature, while the city is often synecdochic of the relationship between the human and idealized and demonized culture. Third, from the repeated, and competing, articulations of claims to be able to construct, maintain, and secure the ideal community, it is clear that this ideal community has taken discursive forms, or rather, derives from and influences discursive practices. Fourth, at all times, these discursive practices require and depend on claims to authority; as we see through these readings, this authority is linked to claims to impose metaphysical stability or continuity on unstable worldly phenomena, usually through claims about nature and hence appropriate culture. This in turn enables claims to authority to be depoliticized. Finally, we begin to see how forms of community and forms of authority have been bound together within this discourse of nature and culture, the

body and the city. In other words, we see how the fear of insecurity has constructed community and authority as the interconnected framework of politics.

If there is such a resounding similarity between the formulations of ideal community – the problems that threaten the ideal and the solutions posited for security – how can we think about politics or community, nature and culture, in contemporary times? Are we bound to consistently replay our ideals of community, our attempts to find ways to live together, within this dilemma? It certainly begins to seem overwhelmingly pervasive, something essential to human nature, even. Yet to recognize this dilemma in terms of discursive productions is to recognize that it is contingent. We must distinguish between the pervasive and the necessary. It is impossible to say whether this concern for stability and continuity, in the face of change, disruption, and mortality, precedes this discourse or is produced through it. The impossibility is not, however, because it is another unknowable Kantian truth, but because the formulation depends on a commitment to unidirectional causalities. The reading of the politics of sprawl that follows suggests that this formulation is, itself, impossible to maintain.

5: ADVERTISING THE IDEAL BUILT COMMUNITY

Attractive advertisements for real estate developments in the Okanagan are easily found in newspapers and housing magazines across western Canada, and internet searches for lots or housing developments reveal a range of sophisticated corporate marketing websites that present carefully structured accounts of the qualities and virtues that each development claims to offer. Central to many of these advertisements, particularly within the website context that allows for more detailed, narrative presentations, are the repeated offerings of inclusion within a community. Reading these advertisements closely provides access to the language and images through which conceptions of ideal community are constructed, reconstructed, altered, and debated. Their consistencies and inconsistencies demonstrate which constructions are dominant, which are taken for granted, and which are subject to debate. The accumulation and repetition of particular verbal and visual patterns enables us to identify the techniques that are used in this discursive production, and the identification of interwoven and interdependent definitions of central concepts – such as nature, culture, balance, security, tradition, and progress – enables us to understand better the foundations on which ideal community is constructed.

Current building developments in the Okanagan span the range from downtown condominium constructions and rezoning to allow carriage houses on existing single-family dwelling sites, to more extensive projects such as gated retirement communities, new subdivisions, and the increasingly popular blend of golf course, residential neighbourhood and resort accommodation in one over-arching development. As suburban

sprawl is, at the heart of its definition, a way of naming communities constructed at the edge of the established urban residential zone, the advertisements chosen as exemplary are ones that promote new developments on land that was previously unbuilt, located at the fringes of what is currently the urban residential footprint and not well-serviced by local public transportation systems. Four such developments are the focus of this reading: Wilden and Highpointe, both in Kelowna; The Lakes, half-way between Kelowna and Vernon at Lake Country; and Whisper Ridge, east of Vernon.[12] There could have been many others, but these four provide indications of both the differences between developments in this form and the similarities among them.

Wilden, a development of 2,800 new homes (to be built in phases) on over 800 hectares in North Kelowna, is described on its promotional website as a "premier hillside community" (Estates and Lots), a "sensitively planned community" (Okanagan Lifestyle) and an "exciting, master-planned community" (Estates and Lots). On another page, the developers promise that Wilden will provide residents with a "complete community pre-planned to the highest standards" (Vision). These frequent, always adjectively-modified uses of the term "community" emphasize that a potential buyer is not merely buying a lot or a house, but a home within a stable, predictable, and unified environment. The developer's vision is that Wilden "will be a truly livable lifestyle community in a natural setting and the envy of Canada" (Vision). Residents will not simply reside in their houses; they will be "proud of their outstanding community[,]…contributing to and identifying with its concept" (Vision). This community is special but accessible, open to all those who – beyond being able to afford it – share in the vision of the developer and

want to identify themselves with this community. It is not a community that develops spontaneously or responsively from the interactions of residents, but a "pre-planned" and "master-planned" community that exists by virtue of the structure and layout of the development. At Wilden, residents are only needed to enact the community that is envisioned.

Also in Kelowna, "[n]estled harmoniously on Knox Mountain," lies "the rare, private community of Highpointe" (Philosophy). According to the development's website, Highpointe is being developed as 69 "estate" lots (Local Area Map)[13] with designated building envelope maximums for each lot, non-disturbance covenants between lots, and privately owned parklands to transition to Knox Mountain Park and to seclude the development from neighbouring houses. The development is described in more detail as "a gated strata community protected by a no through road access" (Entrance). The "gated entrance of spatial exuberance" (Philosophy) is pictured in an artist's rendition as a low iron gate fronted by a decorative brickwork turn-around. Behind the gate is a curving lane, planted with leafy trees and shrubs. The undisturbed hillside stretches up and back from the gate, and Okanagan Lake shimmers in the distance. No houses can be seen. A page devoted to "home styles" provides detailed instructions on the desired "architectural character" of the development:

> The building forms at Highpointe should reflect the hillside setting, compliment the Natural character of the site and give a feeling of "casual elegance." Generally, horizontal lines … [and] low pitched gable or hip roofs and even flat roof forms will best compliment the setting and give the correct "low-slung" appearance to the building. …An emphasis on natural materials and colours will help the building blend into the natural setting. …Large areas of glass to take in the view, along with overhangs, awnings, louvers and other measures to shade from the sun begin to define the style. (Home Styles)

In this community, belonging is achieved through the "correct" appearance of the house. And belonging is defined against those who do not have access to this restricted community and its benefits. Owners in this development are promised "advantaged access" to the "all-seasons playground" that is Kelowna (Activities). "Highpointe is a place of uncommon beauty… and exclusive hilltop privacy…where the simple things in life are a privilege for its residents. Breathing. Living. Playing" (Inventory). Thus, at Highpointe, the more subtly emphasized community is to be achieved through architectural and aesthetic unity, and through the shared privilege of exclusivity.

The Lakes development, in the District of Lake Country (half-way between Kelowna and Vernon, on the hill between Okanagan Lake to the west and Wood Lake to the east), is composed of a total of 2,100 lots over 120 hectares. It boasts on its website that it is "the newest high-end residential community development in Lake Country" (About The Lakes). It offers "a contemporary community flanked by panoramic lake views and spectacular mountain scenery" (News Editorial). Architectural guidelines protect the "integrity of the community" (Master Plan) and a section of the development is reserved for an "adult community area" (News Editorial) and for multi-family dwellings. Lake Country is described by the development company as "an area rich in pioneering history that today enjoys a charming, small community feel", providing new residents of The Lakes with access to "thriving" local communities, "numerous community sports and field facilities," and opportunities for "community involvement" (Living in Lake Country). Whereas there are very few people pictured on the Highpointe promotional site (one image of a father and son fishing and one image of a young couple

drinking wine are tucked away on the "Activities" page), The Lakes' site highlights young families on almost every page: a father and son in the orchard, a parent and child downhill skiing, a young couple with son smiling in the trees. With the emphasis on small-town social benefits, the lower lot prices,[14] and the proximity to Kelowna and Vernon, The Lakes emphasizes community as a local family tradition that can be joined by newcomers, without having to sacrifice the employment and cultural opportunities available at nearby urban centres.

Fifteen kilometres east of Vernon along Highway 6, in the District of Coldstream, Whisper Ridge is being developed on 60 hectares of a north-facing, mainly forested hillside that overlooks a primarily agricultural valley.[15] The website for this development[16] outlines that 50 estate lots, plus roadways, will cover 28 hectares, while "the remaining 80 acres [32 ha] have been dedicated to public trails and green spaces" (The Lifestyle). Whisper Ridge is "[f]ound beyond golden corn fields and rustic farm houses," where "a gentle winding road draws you up the mountainside to your exclusive acreage home site high above the troubles of the world" (The Lifestyle). Whisper Ridge boasts an additional 66 hectare park, called The Ranchlands, which is held in joint ownership by everyone who owns a lot in the development – "an unprecedented dedication of parkland which has been set aside exclusively for your own enjoyment" (Home). Whisper Ridge therefore advertises itself as "[p]art community and part wilderness preserve" (The Lifestyle). From October 2002 to October 2003, and intermittently since, Whisper Ridge Real Estate published a newsletter as "an opportunity to share our vision and the vision of residents. As we grow, and the seasons pass, we hope that you will continue to follow the community life here at Whisper Ridge"

(October 2002: 4). These newsletters, a combination of building and decorating tips, updates on sales progress, introductions to local businesses and organizations, and folksy descriptions of life in the country, function both as marketing tools and community-building devices: they create Whisper Ridge as a desirable place to live by making prospective buyers feel as though they will become part of an already-existing social network based on shared family, aesthetic, and recreation values.

Each of these promotional sites invokes a sense of community in order to make the development more appealing. "Community" is presented as a form or feature of life that can be valued without question. However, variety in the text and images of the sites makes it clear that "community" does not have a single form or definition. On the one hand, "community" is consistently presented as traditional, timeless, desirable, and attainable with the necessary purchase: "community" is evidently something to which people should want to belong. On the other hand, through these multiple presentations, "community" is given vague, implicit, and often contradictory meanings. Community is clearly a term that developers, marketers, and prospective buyers feel they understand, appreciate, and can respond to, even when it cannot be clearly defined and identified. It therefore can be understood as part of the emotional or affective appeal of the advertisements. What community means in any finite or detailed sense does not matter for these advertisements; it can be pre-planned unity, shared exclusivity, family accessibility, neighbourly country living, or any other vision. What matters are the feelings and associations that the term "community" raises in prospective buyers. In the context of questions about why suggested solutions to the problem of sprawl do not seem to achieve enough support to make significant changes to development practices, the

emotional appeal of claims to "community" in advertisements for suburban and exurban developments in the Okanagan Valley needs to be taken more seriously. Community is obviously a powerful concept, and understanding the appeal of sprawling developments therefore requires understanding the force of this promise of community.

The frequent but inconsistent invocations of "community" suggest that the wide range of print and on-line ads that attempt to sell suburban developments in the Okanagan Valley act not as simple representations of community life in the region, but as visual and verbal constructions of particular claims about community – what it should be, where it should be located, how it should be built, and who should be included. Thus "community" appears as an open concept whose particular meanings are produced and reproduced in each particular time and place. This process of definition occurs both through the actual uses and explicit content given to the term, and through the contexts, associations, and relationships within which it is placed. Community must therefore be understood not only as an experience or a way of life, but also as a discursive practice. Within this process, as we have seen, specific meanings ascribed to "community" are not only multiple but often conflicting. As a concept, it simultaneously maintains fluidity and consistency, contradiction and unity: differences are claimed and produced, but enough similarities exist in usage to make the term recognizable, without which the affective power of appeals to community would be diminished.

While specific details of visions of community vary, consistency is found in the repetition of the link between community and a vision of the ideal way of organizing a group of people. "Community," in any of its specific uses, always includes this sense of offering its inhabitants the best possible life, as individuals and members of a group. The

offer of community is the promise of the good life: in this specific instance, a vision of a stable home within a shared commitment to the group. Within the development advertisements, the specific features of the good life, as the underlying promise of community, vary in the same details as the claim of community itself: shared space and values, exclusivity and privilege, small-town charm, or family and tradition. Yet the presentation of community as an idyllic and uncompromised existence is shared by all of them. The features or aspects of this idyll are repeated, with minor variations, in each. The advertisements all promise a closeness to nature, whether through parks and trails incorporated into the development, proximity to natural hillsides or more formal recreational settings, panoramic views and vistas, or even through the materials used in housing constructions. The advertisements also stress the proximity of the development to cultural amenities, such as shopping and restaurants, businesses and schools. Further, these two features of nature and culture are represented as distinct, so that the development can offer the promise of a balance or harmony between them. This theme of balance is emphasized explicitly through claims, statements, and descriptions; it is emphasized through rhetorical techniques such as the continual juxtaposition of the natural setting with the cultural possibilities; and it is emphasized visually through the repetition of "natural" spaces on the one hand (including undisturbed hillsides, planned parks, and carefully tended vineyards and orchards), and cultivated spaces on the other (such as commercial centres, social and cultural amenities, and the very blueprints of the proposed communities). The distinction of nature and culture is repeated through a consistent use of imagery of space and time, where a rural or agricultural space and a slow pace or lack of change is equated with a natural setting, and urban, industrial, or

economic space and speed or activity is equated with cultural spaces and practices. This is evident in quotes that claim the natural setting to be timeless, against the modern activity of the cities, as well as in the emphasis on the relaxed quality of life within the suburban community, versus the rapid transportation that can carry residents into the city. Thus, the pre-existing rural communities of the Okanagan Valley, with their older houses and agricultural roots, are continually located within this invocation of the natural, timeless and traditional, while the growing urban centres are continually located within the invocation of the cultural, fast-paced, and modern. The suburban developments promise, in their advertisements, to provide purchasers with favourable access to both. Nature and culture, rural and urban, slow and fast, traditional and modern, are brought into a fine balance in the suburban community. The final promise of the good life is that this balance brings with it harmony, stability, and security – the promise that the good life will continue undisturbed into the future.

The promised good life, therefore, is achieved through a community form that can balance these oppositional terms and create a functional, and more importantly, *stable*, resolution between the tensions that they represent. Not surprisingly, the image of the good life that is constituted through advertisements that promote sprawling suburban developments can only be realized by participating in the form of development that will give access to this vision of the good life – in other words, advertisements for sprawl define the good life in terms that can only be met through sprawl. There is a suggestive relationship between the continued spread of sprawling communities and the discursive practices that constitute particular notions of the ideal community, the good life, according to a particular resolution between nature and culture, rural and urban, that only

particular forms of suburban development can satisfy. The emotional, affective appeal of the "good life" and of "community," both in themselves fluid and open concepts, therefore becomes harnessed to a form of built environment through a range of discursive practices – including, but not limited to, advertisements – that link community to specific ideas about, and relationships among, nature, culture, space, time, harmony, and security.

The relationship between sprawl and the discursive practices that produce notions of ideal community is important not only because sprawl, as we have seen, is an important problem, but also because the form of the problem as a discursive practice is important. Discursive practices, which determine the content of a term through repetition, association, imagery, and other techniques, are at the same time claims to the right (the legitimate authority) to make these determinations. To understand "community" or the "good life" as discursive practices is to recognize that these concepts are produced or constituted in particular ways through their use; these productions encompass both the individual members or participants, and also the community or group as a whole through the determinations of who is to be considered part of the community. However, to understand these terms as discursive productions is also to recognize that each use, each act that attaches visual or verbal content to the term, entails a claim to the authority to define. Embedded within the simple repetition of the notion of community in these advertisements is a claim to the authority to name, define, and build the ideal community, and a claim to be able to maintain and secure this community against change or dissolution from within or without.

6: DISCOURSES OF SPRAWL AND ANALYSES OF SPRAWL

Unproblematized uses of terms such as community, home, harmony, and stability, and in particular, idealized concepts of simple and absolute nature and culture, often transposed as rural and urban, guide the production of advertisements for sprawling developments and drive the continued construction of housing developments according to these particular forms. In his history of the uses of the term sprawl, and particularly the campaigns against sprawl in the United Kingdom and the United States, Robert Bruegmann emphasizes that sprawl itself is a shifting term, which over time is used to designate a wide range of forms of community opposed by a wide range of critics (Bruegmann, 2005: 17-18, 115-116). What Bruegmann's analysis highlights is that sprawl, as a term of description, analysis, and critique, is as much a discursive production as the image of ideal community that advertisements for sprawling developments invoke. The actual content of the term "sprawl," and the forms of community that it is used to signify, is vigorously contested because of the negative connotations that have, through repetition, been constructed as part of sprawl.

It is interesting that Bruegmann links the discourse of sprawl/anti-sprawl to an eighteenth-century poem that idealizes the British country-side and thus makes claims about the natural, and the right, state for the rural and the urban (Bruegmann, 2005: 115-116). We begin to see that there is a long history of debate regarding the right form of human community that revolves around competing uses of concepts of the rural and the urban, as claims regarding the right relationship of nature and culture. In turn, we can see that even as the promotion of developments that can be characterized as sprawl relies on this discourse of ideal community, the analyses and critiques of sprawl rely on the same

discourse. The same idealizations and simplifications of nature and culture, rural and urban, country and city, which form the claims to ideal community that sprawling developments consistently mobilize, form the basis of analyses and critiques of sprawl.

Sprawl, approached as a category of analysis, is understood according to the same constellation of terms as its supporters use to define and promote it. Critiques of sprawl (including this one) and suggested alternatives to sprawl rely on many of the same assumptions, idealizations, and uncomplicated definitions that support the discourse of sprawl, precisely because the broader discursive practices of ideal community have, over time, constructed such a powerful framework of thinking about human interaction. For example, the increasingly popular "smart growth" principles, on the one hand, ascribe value or preference to open green space, locally grown agricultural products, and traditional, mixed-use, densely-built urban centres.[17] On the other hand, new urbanism promotes reforming suburban sprawl as "neo-traditional community developments" that incorporate more mixed-use and old-fashioned commercial main streets, while maintaining a safe distance from the urban core. The very division of alternatives into these two basic categories continues the trend set in the mid-1800s to solve the problems of modern cities by either regenerating city centres or building idealized garden (edge) communities. As we saw earlier, the original suburban developments, in the form of Garden Cities and other similar constructions, were promoted as a solution to the problems of the early modern city. The other proposed solution of the time was the City Beautiful movement. Thus, we can understand suburban sprawl as a continuation of one of the two main discourses of the problems and solutions of modern cities, even as it also

links to a much older discourse of ideal community. While this analysis focuses on the line of thinking that has looked to the suburbs for solutions, rather than the city centre, we can see that each set of proposed solutions – the Garden City, the suburb, and the neo-traditional community on the one hand, and the City Beautiful, the regenerated urban core, and the smart growth principles on the other hand – rely on the conceptual distinction between, and claims to a right relation between, the rural and the urban, the country and the city, that ultimately depends upon a specific relationship between nature and culture to achieve ideal community.

Yet as sprawl continues to exceed specific city boundaries, as sprawling developments of one city meet and intermingle with the suburban zones of other cities, and to the extent that business or employment opportunities are located in these suburban zones rather than city centres, sprawl becomes less a form of sub-urbia (literally outside or below the city; see Bruegmann, 2005: 23), and more a form of fragmented, overlapping, dispersed and competing jurisdictions within metropolitan regions (Gillham, 2002: 23).[18] This situation challenges traditional definitions of cities as dense, centralized settlements and easy distinctions between urban and rural settings. Sprawl therefore poses a further analytical problem, in that its definition, identification, and explanation depends upon idealized notions of the urban and the rural, culture and nature, community and the good life, which sprawl itself shows to be problematic.

The idealization and unquestioned discursive repetition of these linked concepts is a critical factor in the emotional appeal that drives sprawl. Therefore, the fact that the critiques of sprawl and the range of suggested alternatives similarly depend upon these idealizations is troubling. We can understand this as a dynamic that we are working

within, where the simultaneous, impossible idealization of nature and culture, as opposing terms, drives a resolution such as sprawl, that is the antithesis of either pole; and where the idealizations are therefore re-invoked as the counter to the antithesis, requiring further problematic resolutions. While suburban sprawl was always envisioned as a solution to the problems of the city, and while contemporary suggested solutions to sprawl repeat the fundamental assumptions and practices that make sprawl problematic, this brief first reading of the advertisements that promote sprawl hints that the tensions inherent in sprawl are generating the current attempts to solve this problem. Until we understand better the constitution of these tensions, until we understand sprawl as a problem that is inextricably linked to the discursive over-simplification of the terms held in tension, we are most likely to reproduce these tensions within other problematic, simplistic solutions.

7: SPRAWL AND MODERNITY

If sprawl is to be called an attempt to materialize a solution to the problems of the modern city, one could proceed to analyze sprawl as a form of community development that is enabled by a range of conditions and forces specific to modernity. Certainly, the possibility of contemporary sprawl arises out of the easy transfer of goods and capital, easy private transportation, different and overlapping levels of government and planning authorities, specific taxation policies, middle-class reaction to the industrialization of cities, and the commodification or capitalization of land in cities to provide land rents. The principal institutions of this modern age, which underlie each of these specific conditions and forces in multiple ways, are the state, on the one hand, and capital, on the other. Sprawl could therefore be labeled and analyzed as a problem of the formation of politics into a global system of nation-states and the formation of economic activity into a global system of capital. Thus, one way of reading sprawl as a political problem is to focus on the spaces, forms, and practices of politics as understood in the modern age – the inextricable link between the state and capital. An analysis of sprawl as a political problem specific to modernity would determine how sprawl arises out of these spaces, forms, and practices. A critique of sprawl, using this line of analysis, would attempt to determine how or where opponents of sprawl could intersect with these forces and conditions to reshape the built community.

This perspective on the problem of sprawl would seek to understand the complex interplay between the processes that turn land and nature more generally into commodities that can be bought, sold, value-added, marketed, and desired; the processes

that turn people into citizens of states with multiple and sometimes conflicting allegiances to other legal and administrative entities; and the processes that turn people into individuals with complex, and sometimes contradictory, notions of their rights, freedoms, responsibilities, belongings, and unique identities. To understand this aspect of sprawl, we would need to examine the connection between the rise of capitalism, the dominance of the nation-state, and the increasing urbanization that is in tension with the claimed sovereignty of state politics. We would need to examine the economic pressures caused by taxation policies, capitalization of land itself, and contemporary flows of goods and resources that disrupt the notion of local economies. We would need to examine how these processes and forces contribute to individual and group identifications and exclusions, to understandings of what community and belonging mean and to beliefs about where politics is located and how we participate in it.

Taking this perspective on the specific features of sprawl in the Okanagan highlights elements and relationships within the problem that help to explain its complexity and its intransigence as a contemporary political problem. As one small example, we can begin to understand how and why the properties in question are being marketed, in more or less explicit terms, not just as homes but also as investment opportunities. These marketing techniques range from subtle mentions of dynamic, growing communities to Highpointe's direct invitation to "[i]nvest in the most unique and exclusive community in Kelowna" ("Beauty you can come home to"). The possibility of these purchases as "investments" that bring profits to development companies and individual purchasers arises out of a number of interconnected forces. There are structures of employment, which lead to numbers of young families leaving major urban

centres to afford to purchase houses, and numbers of workers retiring and searching for locations to spend their retirement in leisure (the emphasis in development advertisements on golf courses and fishing is part of this dynamic). There are structures of self- and community-identification, where the location and value of home ownership confirm social belonging not only with physical neighbours, but also with social and economic classes. Within these structures, paying property taxes unites owners to local government, just as their income taxes unite them to provincial and federal governments. There are broader structures of money and profits, which see land and houses as vehicles for interest and profit; in this context, mortgage rates and housing values are charted like any other capital loan or stock purchase. There are structures of local decision-making, where decisions on zoning and land-use are made and the effects felt for years to come (for example, in Kelowna, zoning decisions and sales to developers that occurred twenty years ago are the basis of developments just under construction now, while current efforts to develop urban growth boundaries through an Official Community Plan will not significantly change Kelowna's growth patterns for years yet). Finally, there are structures that connect local, national and global economies, such that the competition to remain part of these economies drives decision-making. These structures are the background context for a recent article in the *Western Investor* magazine, which lauds former Vernon mayor Sean Harvey for using innovative financial measures (such as advantageous municipal financing rates and fast-track decision-making) to ensure commercial investment in the community, including investments by residential community developers (O'Brien, 2004: 1-2).[19]

Within this line of analysis, we see that sprawl is popular because it is profitable, and it is profitable because structures of employment, social identification, investment, policy-making, and economic integration have combined in particular ways to make sprawl desirable and functional within the contexts of these structures. Part of the difficulty of addressing sprawl is that the immediate or obvious problems and their effects, such as those noted in the opening sections, must be understood in relation to these more fundamental forces and pressures of modern political economies. As such, they are not isolated or distinct elements of the problem. Instead, they form a complex assemblage of practices, structures, and dynamics that are difficult to identify, let alone begin to parse out and reassemble in different ways.

Yet it is not possible to understand the relationship between sprawl and the structures of state, capital, and modernity in purely contemporary terms. Suburban development has consistently been pursued and promoted as a reliable solution to a range of problems of human community in the increasingly urban context of the modern West. These perceived problems – problems of (over-) crowding and anonymity, disease and decay, hurried and harried existence, loss of tradition and traditional organization, and separation from nature – were noted by early city reformers and analyzed by many of the classical writers on the culture of cities, such as Simmel (1969), Weber (1969), and Spengler (1969). These same problems are still perceived as central to the urban experience by many today, a link drawn explicitly in a "news editorial" posted on the corporate website for The Lakes development:

> In 1898 John Muir wrote in the Atlantic Monthly, "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going up into the hills is going home; that mountain parks are useful not only as fountains of timber but as fountains of life." Fast forward

> 107 years and these words still ring true today in the Okanagan. In a world where the speed of life grows more hurried, many are seeking solace in the calm, rolling hills that rim the valley. Okanagan Land Development Corporation knows this to be true. Their latest property development, 'The Lakes', offers the 'over-civilized' access to a contemporary community flanked by panoramic lake views and spectacular mountain scenery. (News Editorial)

Developing structures of state and capital in the early modern period resulted in a degree of industrialization and urbanization that was considered to have irrevocably changed the nature of the country-side, the nature of the city, and the nature of traditional community forms. The original suburbs of the Garden City were intended to solve these problems of city life, just as contemporary sprawl is a suggested solution to the specific problems that late capitalism and late modernity are seen to impose on the city. Contemporary sprawl, and the problems associated with it, is therefore linked both historically and conceptually to previous problems in the forms of human community and the attempted solutions to these problems.

Analyses of sprawl that focus solely on the state and capital as the conditions and forces that structure modernity will help us understand many aspects of the contemporary problems associated with sprawl. However, we will be left facing a paradox: although sprawl is supposed to be a solution to the problems of modern capitalism and politics as the nation-state, it is made possible and supported by these same structures. In the recognition of the myriad problems of the past that have contributed to contemporary sprawl as a solution, and the myriad problems produced now and into the future by contemporary sprawl, we see hints of another ongoing dynamic. We have already seen that sprawl can be considered part of conceptual dynamic propelled by the impossible necessity of resolving a tension between idealized poles. We can also see that sprawl is

part of a temporal dynamic of problems and solutions: sprawl is both an attempted solution to prior problems, and a problem in itself that generates more problems. This temporal dynamic formulates each perceived problem as a before and sends each successive resolution into the after.

There are two reasons why an analysis of sprawl that focuses on the structure of the state and capital is insufficient to understand this problem or paradox. First, analyses of commodification or the production of desire help us understand the specific techniques and practices used to support sprawl, but they do not explain why this specific form is commodified, why it works, and what it plays on, that it can elicit such visceral, affective appeal. Second, this focus suggests that modernity can be isolated from what came before, rather than seen – as the dynamic of problems and solutions suggests – as itself an attempted solution to problems of politics and community that existed at the time. What is important about sprawl and modernity is that claims that are made regarding modernity, and how modernity could solve the problems of politics and community before then, are the claims that reproduce community according to sprawl. The structures of politics and economics that support sprawl through techniques of commodification are the structures that were devised as attempts to construct a modern world that solved the prior problems of politics and community. Thus it is important to analyze the problem of sprawl as part of a dynamic with a longer history.

8: FROM MODERN SPRAWL TO ANCIENT COMMUNITY

This underlying consideration of sprawl as a solution makes it harder to recognize and address the problems that sprawl generates. However, if we think about the feature that more than any identifies sprawl – the transition of non-urban land into an increasingly urbanized zone – we can identify another peculiar problem or tension: as inhabitants move to the fringes of the city in search of a form of community that is said to escape the problems of the city proper, the city itself continues to exceed former boundaries. The city spreads, and the frontier of edge developments continues to get pushed outward, drawing more space into the immediate urban built environment. In other words, we are faced with a problem that seems to derive its force from the nature of the necessary solution. The characterization of a range of conditions in the modern city as problematic creates the features that identify sprawl as an idealized solution. In materializing this solution, in seeking out the remaining non-urban spaces in which to build healthy, safe communities, we perpetuate the dynamic that subsumes the non-urban into the urban. The desire for the simplicity and community that sprawl plays on is constantly subverted or undermined by precisely the movement of the city that sprawl maintains.

The core of this tension, the force within this dynamic, is due to a contradictory role that the city holds in our thinking about human community. To this point, the city has appeared in this narrative as a source of problems, a form of community that has been severely criticized. However, the city also figures as a source of benefits, a site to be desired and admired. Advertisements for sprawl in the Okanagan do not emphasize that

the real estate on offer is far from every city and town, allowing residents absolute isolation and freedom from anything that might resemble an urban way of life. Rather, they emphasize proximity and access, the ability to enjoy all the benefits that the city has to offer: excitement, diversity, culture, and participation in the structures and networks that connect the city to other locations, near and far. This characterization echoes the contradictory assessments of the urban that are found in the classical writers on city life. While German authors such as Simmel (1969), Weber (1969), and Spengler (1969), and North American authors such as Wirth (1969), Mumford (1969), Arendt (1958), Sennett (1970), and Young (1990) each have a theoretical approach to the problems they perceive in the modern city, they also have much to say on the important gains to be had from urban life. These gains include the possibility for greater interior reflection and a stronger sense of individuality; a more dynamic, progressive culture; an acceptance of chaos or unpredictability; or a greater opportunity for democracy or justice through coming to terms with social difference. In each case, these are gains that the city, if structured properly, can offer inhabitants, and that rural life, because of its slow pace and traditional forms, cannot allow.

Thus the problem of human community that the discourse of sprawl seeks to solve is not simply that community in the form of the city is bad, and community in the form of rural or village life is good. Instead, this discourse emphasizes the problem of building human community in a way that can enjoy the benefits of the city and urban culture, without sacrificing the benefits of a quiet, simple, traditional life built in harmony with nature. This consistent characterization of the country and the city, of nature and culture, as existing in a tension that needs to be resolved to achieve a balanced form of

community, is connected to a broader discourse of the tensions inherent in building and maintaining human community. This dynamic, this shifting but consistently replayed discourse of the problem of human community, can be traced as far back as the attempts by Plato and Aristotle to envision a stable and secure form of community. Over time, this discourse consistently attempts to generate a solution – such as the polis; such as the state; such as sprawl – that depends upon the conditions that generate the problem.

9: THE ROOTS OF THE DISCOURSE OF SPRAWL

To recognize that this tension between nature and culture has been troubling Western thought since Plato and Aristotle, and to recognize their articulations of the *polis* as initial attempts to resolve this tension, is to recognize that this discourse of the problem of human community is a discourse of politics. It is to recognize the roots of thinking consciously and explicitly about politics within these early considerations of how to structure community to achieve the good life. It is also to recognize the extent to which Western thinking about politics has continued to work within the initial framings of the problem and the solution, of problems and solutions, that articulations of the *polis* represent.

Although the term *polis* has come to be translated as city, it includes the notion of self-sufficient and self-governing communities. At the heart of thinking about the *polis* as the foundation of politics is this definition of political association as the secure and stable good life of the community. Out of this story of politics as the stable *polis* arise three problems that have continued to trouble political thinking. The first is the concern for the right space of political association, which has led to attempts to locate the *polis* in the city, the nation-state, and more recently the global, the regional, or the urban. The second is the concern for the right form of political association, which is expressed through considerations of types of constitutions and structures that can guide human interactions. The third is the concern for the right practice of political association, the right relationship of each person to herself and others, within the community. From the outset, then, thinking about the city as the ideal community, and thinking about politics as the

ideal space, form, and practice of human interaction, were inextricably linked. In this line of thinking, the fundamental task of politics becomes securing the community: determining and enforcing the appropriate space, form, and practice that will ensure its long-lasting stability. The city, as described in theory and inscribed in the built environment, has played a particular role as the initial condition of possibility for politics, the embodiment of politics, and the threat to politics. The role is developed and articulated out of conceptions of nature and culture, as we will see. This complex notion of the politics of nature and culture continues to influence how we think about political association, long after the city as *polis* has apparently lost its pre-eminence in political thinking.

After centuries of state-centred political doctrine, it is difficult to return to thinking seriously about the *polis*, the political community, being located primarily in the city or city-state rather than the country or nation-state. To begin to think in this way, it becomes necessary to untangle the various conceptions contained within "the city." The city must be considered in two directions simultaneously: the city as *polis* must be contrasted to the state as *polis*, a consideration of the space and scale of political associations; and yet the city as *polis* must also be distinguished from the city as urban centre, a consideration of the forms and practices of association, where the former is seen by definition to be political and the latter more often seen as the particular threat to politics. When we return the ancient notion of the city as *polis* to the center of analysis, we are able to focus on a history of politics in the West as attempts to materialize ideas about the space, forms, and practices of the good life. The city as *polis* is the first recognized embodiment of political association, where the spaces and forms of

organization can support or threaten stability, and it therefore enables the first recognition of people as conscious political actors, whose practices individually and communally also either support or threaten stability. From this perspective, we can see that founding dreams of the *polis* as being able to ensure the stability of the communal good life continue to influence thinking about the possibilities for politics; and the original threats that were seen to destabilize the *polis* continue to be considered threats to contemporary attempts to secure the good life.

That the space of politics has been located at the scale of the nation-state for several centuries demonstrates how the line of thinking about politics as the *polis* is not bound to the physical scale of the city; instead, it centres on a repetition of discursive patterns and perceived problems. We are therefore able to trace this line of thinking through a period where politics was shifted out of the city, and follow it back to a context where the ideal political community has been relocated in a local, directly experienced form of lived residential community. Yet, because of the dominance of the modern conception of politics as the nation-state, we now witness the discourse of sprawl as idealized community separated from any explicit discourse of politics. The strange, ongoing tension between nature and culture, the country and the city, which is continually reworked in this discourse, becomes an apolitical problem to which sprawl forms a literal middle-ground solution.

A significant problem with this discourse of politics, and with its repetition within a depoliticized urban sprawl discourse, is the consistency of the "problem" itself, which starts to appear central to political theory. This problem is articulated in terms of nature and culture, country and city, rural and urban, of which we have already seen hints. It is

also articulated in terms of insecurity and stability, mortality and immortality, body and mind, embodiment and rationality. None of these sets form exact equivalences, but all are centrally located at the heart of the problems that this discourse of politics seeks to solve. These themes are first elaborated and woven together in the descriptions and claims about the *polis* that are presented by Plato and Aristotle; they are interwoven to create a set of tensions and conditions for "politics" that remain central, influencing how politics has been thought and materialized ever since.

10: THE *POLIS* AS IDEAL COMMUNITY

To understand how suburban sprawl eventually becomes posited as a solution to the problems, not just of modern urban living but of politics itself in the contemporary era, it is necessary to understand how the problem of politics was initially framed and what solutions were initially posited. The problem, as conceived by Plato in *The Republic* and Aristotle in *The Politics*,[20] is a peculiar problem of human being: we live and die as part of the natural world, but we seem to be different from other aspects of nature. In thinking about the problem of how to organize human community and interaction in the best possible way, Plato and Aristotle both attempt to understand what they see as this unique problem, and unique possibility, of being human in the world. They frame this as a three-fold problem. First, there is the problem of determining the way that humans can live together, how our interactions can be structured, to ensure that we can meet our potential to be uniquely human. This is the problem of the constitution of the community, which leads to articulations of the best possible spaces, forms, and practices of community. Second, because individuals and groups do not remain the same over time, there is the concern over how to maintain this good life. This is the problem of stability, which leads to a focus on the threats to the good life and the possibilities for securing it against these threats. Third, because humans are seen as being different to animals due to our capacity to reason, speak, and remember, there is the question of determining conscious rules and reasons that should guide how humans live together. This is the problem of the authority to define community, which to leads to attempts to develop conscious foundations for the described community constitution. Linguistically,

culturally, and theoretically, our concepts of the community, the city, and politics itself are linked to these conflicts and developments, and to the reiteration over time of Plato's and Aristotle's framing of these problems.

For Plato and Aristotle, the *polis* is a self-sufficient, self-governing human community that has as its central purpose the achievement of the good life, whether this is defined as justice and the good (by Plato), or as ethics and the life of intrinsic value (by Aristotle). The good life is claimed to be achievable only through a specific form of community that is different from the household or the village, on the one hand, and from the nation, understood as a religious, economic, linguistic, or cultural unity, on the other. The *polis*, the autonomous city, is the community form that is deemed necessary to materialize the good life; it is distinguished from the forms of traditional organization and structure that came before and from other forms of social organization that were concurrent because it requires of (at least some) participants their conscious attempts to develop foundations of and structures for the good life. The articulations of the *polis* by Plato and Aristotle simultaneously make this requirement clear and act as representations of such conscious attempts at construction.

The claim that the good life can only be achieved through life in the self-governing city must be understood as part of a transition in concepts of justice, community, and human order that Aeschylus describes: a move from a form of justice based on revenge, dictates of the gods, and the authority of the household [*oikos*] to a form of justice that is deliberate, consistent, and consciously human. This transition identifies the capacity to analyze and rationalize laws as a necessary aspect of dealing with the complexity of social organizations. The laws that arise out of this constitution

are required to govern the whole community of the city. The slave, the wage-labourer, the citizen [*politicos*], and the woman might all be bound by different laws or expectations, but these are consistent within the *polis*, not set within each household. Divisions or differences in application are based on positions within hierarchies, rather than differences between households. This emphasis on the self-governing community reflects the belief in the reasoning capacity of human beings as a feature that is necessarily and ideally human.

The claim that the good life can only be achieved when a *polis* is self-sufficient is made through repeated use of the Greek word *autarkeia* or *autarkês*, the basic meaning of which is to have or produce all that is needed for life. Thus, concepts of self-sufficiency involve claims about what humans need, what is natural and necessary for them to flourish. Plato locates the origin of the city in this drive for self-sufficiency. No one can exist entirely alone, so people come together to live in a city "as partners and helpers," to work together and share the outcomes of their work, because "each believes that this is better for himself" (Plato, 1992: 369c). The city works to enable communal self-sufficiency, Plato says, because people are by nature suited to different roles and activities. If a city can be structured so that everyone does what their nature has them best suited to, then the city itself will be constituted according to nature, and all people will have the best opportunity to fulfill their nature in the city. It is important that Plato sees a role for merchants and traders in this city; self-sufficiency does not mean isolation from other communities, but the right association of people to undertake all the roles necessary to keep a city going, including importing and producing quality goods for exporting (Plato, 1992: 370e-371e). Arranging the city according to the nature of the inhabitants

will lead to justice, which Plato defines as each having and doing one's own (appropriate work, appropriate participation in the community), and thus to the good life. For Plato, then, understanding and constituting the good life for the individual and the city requires knowledge of the true nature of human being.

Aristotle's emphasis on self-sufficiency uses *autarkeia* to mean not only producing all that is needed, but also possessing the conditions necessary for well-being. He defines *autarkeia* further in the *Nichomachean Ethics* as "that which by and of itself makes life desirable and lacking in nothing" (Aristotle, 1995: 320). *Autarkeia* thus connects closely to Aristotle's concept of the *telos*, the final or perfect end, the form that is only ever an end in itself and never a means to any further form or association. For Aristotle, the *telos* of a thing is its potential and its specific and unique purpose, as given by nature. The *telos* of human being is to live a life of value (as described in the *Nichomachean Ethics*), and the *polis* describes any conscious attempt to "constitute…an association of households and clans in a good life, for the sake of attaining a perfect and self-sufficing existence" (Aristotle, 1995: $1280^{b}29$). Thus humans are by nature "political animals" [*anthrôpos phusei politikon zôion*], creatures intended to live in the city, not the village or the extended nation. For Aristotle, the term city, as a definition, relies on the function, "and it follows that if they are no longer fit to discharge their function, we ought not to say that they are still the same things, but only that, by an ambiguity, they still have the same names" (Aristotle, 1995: $1253^{a}18$). According to this rationale, all gatherings called cities should not automatically be considered a *polis* in the sense of a political community, but only those that actively and consciously seek to constitute the good life. The city is thus defined not by its size, density, economy, or other material features, but

rather by the effort or intent behind its structures and institutions. As with Plato, understanding the good life for the individual, and how to structure community to achieve this good life, requires an understanding of the essence of nature.

This emphasis on sufficiency and government, which sees the city as both a development of natural human activity and the product of conscious human organization, helps to explain why the relationship between the individual and the city is central to the possibility of the *polis*. In *The Republic* and *The Politics*, the term constitution encompasses the way people live, and the way that people, as the individual parts or elements of the city, interact to make it a unified but diversified whole, healthy and strong, like a human body. The use of the word constitution thus plays on the dual reference to the make-up of the human individual and to the make-up of the city. Claims regarding the proper constitution of the *polis* – the institutions and rules that the city needs to flourish – are paralleled, and justified philosophically, by claims regarding the nature of the right or healthy constitution of the individual – the essence or ideal of human being, both moral and physical. Both Plato and Aristotle use this complex notion of constitution to argue that the *polis* is the form of organization necessary to ensure a good life that is both natural and uniquely human.

The claims about the constitution of the individual vary between Plato and Aristotle, and their claims regarding the best possible political constitution vary in turn. In *The Republic*,[21] Plato divides the soul into three parts – an appetitive or desiring part; a courageous, honour-loving part; and a rational, knowledge-loving (philosophical) part – and claims that the relationship between the soul and the body of the individual depends upon which part of the soul is dominant. For Plato, the constitution of the human soul in

three parts forms the basis for his claim that there are three main categories of people, grouped according to which part of their soul is dominant. Between the aspects of the soul, there is a single, rational constitution that holds the possibility of leading a just and happy life while physically embodied: "when the entire soul follows the philosophical part, and there is no civil war in it, each part of it does its own work exclusively and is just, and in particular it enjoys its own pleasures, the best and truest pleasures possible for it" (Plato, 1992: 586e-587a). Likewise, there is a single political constitution, one led by philosophical rulers, that can unite the three types of people into a community that can embody the good life:

> "the philosopher, by consorting with what is ordered and divine ...becomes as divine and ordered as a human being can ... and if he should come to be compelled to put what he sees there into people's characters, whether into a single person or into a populace...he will [not] be a poor craftsman of moderation, justice, and the whole of popular virtue. ...the city will never find happiness until its outline is sketched by painters who use the divine model" (Plato, 1992: 500c-500e).

Thus for Plato, the best possible constitution of both the individual and the city is achieved when the rational part of the soul, or the rational people in the community, are able to structure the embodied, desirous parts.

Aristotle alters this constitution somewhat, claiming that the important distinction is between ruling and being ruled. This relationship exists between the two parts of the soul, and between the soul and the body: "animate beings are composed, in the first place, of soul and body, with the former naturally ruling and the latter naturally ruled… The soul has naturally two elements, a ruling and a ruled; and each has its different goodness, one belonging to the rational and ruling element, and the other to the irrational and ruled" (Aristotle, 1995: $1257^{a}17$, $1260^{a}4$). Further, depending on whether one's own constitution

is ruled by the rational part or the appetitive part, one either naturally takes a position of rule within the constitution of the community, or a position of being ruled: "[t]he ruler, accordingly, must possess moral goodness in its full and perfect form…but other people need only to possess moral goodness to the extent required of them….One kind of [goodness] is concerned with ruling, the other with serving" (Aristotle, 1995: 1260^{a}4). Law and justice are the process of joint or communal reasoning in the city; in other words, they are only possible in the city and make the city complete, and hence the people in the city completely human (Aristotle, 1995: 1257^{a}17). The ideal constitution, for Aristotle, has the citizens of the *polis* (those whose natures predispose them for ruling) jointly governing themselves and the other members. This enables them to combine ruling and being ruled [*archein kai archesthai*], thus avoiding the excessive tyranny found in those who only rule, and avoiding the democratic anarchy found in being led by those who, by their natures, should be ruled.

In each, the crucial importance of the *polis* is found in its capacity to enable the individual and the community to live in this best possible condition. The unique problem of human life, as conceived by Plato and Aristotle, is the troublesome combination of our animal desires and mortality with our capacity for thought, memory, and thus concepts of eternity and morality. Therefore, each articulates a description of the ideal constitution of the individual and the community that embodies a resolution of this tension between material and physical needs and mental, rational, or metaphysical possibilities or capacities. This individual and communal constitution is to be found in the *polis*, the body politic. The dual emphasis on the body and the soul of the individual, on the material practices and productions and the educational and cultural structures of the city,

highlights the central tensions that make organizing the good life necessary, and difficult to achieve: the individual and the group, the body and the soul, the appetites and rationality, the physical needs and the creative possibilities of human being.

In their attempts to come to terms with these concerns, Plato and Aristotle both invoke concepts of nature and culture to explain the significance of and relationships between the elements of human being and community that they describe. It is too simplistic to say that nature refers only to one side of these binaries and culture to the other, or to say that nature is a base condition to be escaped and culture the human condition to be cultivated. Rather, both Plato and Aristotle construct concepts of nature and culture that are interrelated and jointly necessary, yet clearly distinct from and in tension with each other. Nature is the basis for the human good life in both cases, whether through the unchanging metaphysical nature of the ideal forms, for Plato, or the final and perfect end, the perfect materialization of the potential of nature, in the teleological view of Aristotle. Yet for human community to satisfy the requirements of the good life, it must include the development of the right forms of human culture – forms of institutions and traditions, practices of interaction and behaviour, which are uniquely human. Not every form of human community counts as being fully and properly human; not all communities are recognized as materializing the vision of the *polis*. Both Plato and Aristotle recognize that religion, poetry, music, bad constitutions, and other forms of expression are still products of human culture. If these household, religious, poetic, or mythic practices and beliefs are cultural practices that contribute identity or structure to a community, then there is a sense in which this new political realm is defined against a broader cultural realm. Paradoxically, some forms of culture are considered both natural

and political, while other forms are considered unnatural and apolitical. Thus this initial articulation of politics desires to maintain or include some aspects of culture but reject or exclude other aspects, according to a claim about what is natural, in the name of establishing and securing the good life.

In this discourse of the *polis*, the good life – and therefore politics itself – is consistently threatened by insecurity from within and without. Plato and Aristotle identify threats from within the political constitution, within the city, coming from factionalism, from lack of sufficient rationality or excessive focus on materiality, from improper relationships between the soul and the body of the individual members, or improper relationships between the ruling class and the ruled members of the city. From without, there are threats of war or invasion, and threats from the influence of human communities that are labeled "barbarian" (insufficiently cultured or by nature weak and irrational). The discourse of the ideal community is thus characterized by a concern for stability over time. It maintains an ongoing emphasis on security, on a lack of change or change according to predictable law of teleological development.

This concern with stability in political community is echoed by the emphasis on the metaphysical concern with understanding the nature of "nature" itself. Plato and Aristotle were writing within the context of existing philosophical debates over whether the essence of the world was found in the change that could be observed all around, or in some form of stability that remains consistent within or behind change. Some philosophers, such as Heraclitus and Cratylus, maintained that "'everything flows', everything is always changing, always in a state of flux" (Plato, 1992: xi). In Plato's natural philosophy, there is a distinction between substances in the world, things that

come into being and must then pass away, things that can be observed or experienced with the senses – the world of phenomena – and the eternal, unchangeable forms that encompass true being – the realm of noumena. For Plato, this worrisome state of flux applies only to the things of the visible world, to appearances or phenomena; and while this is the base material condition from which the order of a political community must be constructed, it does not provide the stability for founding and maintaining this order. The forms, on the other hand, have a permanent and objective existence, though outside the material world. They can only come to be known through the right practices of philosophic knowledge, which requires the ability to see beyond the visible world of phenomena and into the non-material realm of noumena – a commitment to a possibility of knowledge that Kant later overturns. For Aristotle, the relationship between the physical and the metaphysical world is formulated through his concept of the natural *telos*. The *telos* indicates the unique potential possessed by each thing according to its nature. This potential can be embodied or materialized correctly, such that the actual truly exists according to its nature. As the *telos* is the final and perfect end, to actualize the *telos* of a person or community is to reach the end of change; it is to achieve the perfect end state where neither growth nor deterioration will occur, nor transformation into some other entity. However, there is no guarantee that this *telos* will necessarily be achieved – there is always the risk that materialization or actualization will not happen according to the *telos*. It is this lack of certainty that brings metaphysical instability into Aristotle's natural philosophy.

In this discourse of the *polis*, the ultimate purpose of political association is to provide stability to the community: the good life can only be said to exist if its

constitution can resist change. After establishing the *kallipolis*, the beautiful city, Plato describes the decay and decline of the constitution, both of the individual ruler and of the entire city, a decline that occurs because the philosopher-kings' own embodiment leads them to make mistakes in their separation of children into the labourer, guardian, and philosopher groups (Plato, 1992: 546a-e). Plato posits this as inevitable, because being can only be known through the material conditions of coming into being and passing away. Insecurity is therefore an effect of the materiality of nature, the embeddedness of the soul within the physical, fallible body. The insecurity that Aristotle highlights is the difficulty of keeping a constitution in proper balance between extremes. Stability and order is to be found in proportion, but the proportion is elusive. It is a function of the constitution, both in terms of size or make-up of the city and of the laws that structure the institutions of the city and the practices of the inhabitants. He claims that "an unlimited number cannot partake in order" (Aristotle, 1995: $1326^{a}25$), and that "[t]hose who …push matters to extremes…fail to see that proportion is as necessary to a constitution as it is (let us say) to a nose. A nose may deviate in some degree from the ideal of straightness…but push the deviation [too far]…and it will cease to look like a nose at all. …What is true of the nose, and of other parts of the body, is true also of constitutions" (Aristotle, 1995: $1309^{b}18$). Even though the city, the constitution, and the citizenry are frequently compared to the human body, the *telos* of the city requires achieving a perfectly proportioned body; in the material world of embodied human being, the perfectly proportioned body can only exist by stopping growth or development in time. Therefore, in his quest for stability, Aristotle attempts to escape the body that eventually grows old and infirm.

Yet it is clear that culture can also pose threats to the security of the community. Plato, for instance, has much to say on the right and the wrong ways to educate citizens, the right and the wrong forms of art, music, and poetry, and the right and the wrong ways to engage in material and economic production. Similarly, Aristotle emphasizes that the culture of a city must be structured through a careful system of education, so that the city as a whole can develop self-control (Aristotle, 1995: 1310^{a}12). Allowing a community to develop the wrong forms of cultural practices and expressions will lead inevitably to instability, uncertainty, and a lack of justice. Therefore, both Plato and Aristotle emphasize that the good life, the proper political existence, is to be found within the self-conscious attempt to develop and implement laws to rule human interaction. Stability is made to rest on the ability for human culture to embody what is essential and natural to human being and what is necessary for human interaction, not just what is desired or possible. Plato and Aristotle both claim that what is essential or natural about human being is our capacity for rational thought, because this is the characteristic that makes us unique. So, they argue that human community needs to be structured according to conscious, rational rules and enabled through careful self-government. They therefore consider questions not only about what content the laws should have, but about who should be considered the authority, not just in their implementation or enforcement, but in their justification and articulation.

The *polis* is intended to solve the problems of human community, namely, how to make it uniquely human and how to make it last, when the world of material phenomena is subject to change. However, because human being has yet to be divorced from the phenomenon of human embodiment and human mortality, rational rules are needed to

give stability to what is seen as the inherent instability of the body. By framing the problem thus, Plato and Aristotle locate the authority to claim the *polis* as the necessary solution within the dual ability to articulate rational, theoretical explanations for what nature is,[22] and explanations of what material or embodied culture must be to align with nature. The terrain of debate about the spaces, forms, and practices of politics is therefore established as competing abstract or philosophical claims about the metaphysics of nature, as the basis for political authority and stability. The specific claims that Plato and Aristotle make – about nature and culture, the body and the soul, rationality and desire, the instability outside the city and the political order inside the city – are echoed by the ways that they rationalize their authority to make these claims. Plato continually emphasizes that the stories of the gods, the mythic poetry that had formed the basis for determining social order and structure, are not to be believed, "they are not true," and they cannot be the basis of adequate laws or a stable constitution; only careful, philosophical study into the abstract, metaphysical forms can supply true knowledge. Aristotle agrees that the careful education of speculative reason is crucial for the ability to understand and participate in a constitution that can support the good life of the individual and the community. The form of their arguments – carefully articulated, theoretically sophisticated rationalizations of their perspectives – further emphasize their opinion that rational knowledge is the right basis of authority. Therefore, their claims about authority cannot be separated from the parallel claims about the ideal, and hence political, community, as the one that can structure the right relationship between embodiment and rationality: the assumptions, values, and requirements of each support and entail the other. Their claims about the right spaces, forms, and practices of political

association become simultaneous claims about the spaces, forms, and practices of knowledge that are necessary or recognized as having value.

Plato and Aristotle each present a description of the problem of human community and the *polis* as the necessary solution: a vision for a specific space, form, and practice of community, an explanation for how stability is best achieved, and a claim to the authority to identify this solution. In thinking about ideal community in the form of the *polis*, we are thinking about the role that politics – as a concept and as a practice – has played in determining the structures of human community over time. In other words, the actual spaces, forms, and practices that constitute community become a political project; security or stability becomes a political project; and the discursive practices that claim the authority to constitute "ideal community" also need to be understood as a political project. Because of the identification of materiality and mortality as what is commonly "natural" about human being, and self-conscious rationality as what is uniquely natural about human being, the discourse of the *polis* as ideal human community emphasizes abstract reason and intellectual activity as a basis for organizing cultural structures. Yet it is clear from reading Plato and Aristotle that the body cannot be abandoned or ignored, as it is both the root of our natural human potential and the (seemingly) inescapable condition of human existence in the world of phenomena. The *polis* discourse is therefore an attempt to understand human existence and the communal good life as both embodied/material and conscious/abstracted, which helps to explain the dual focus on the concepts of the body and claims of knowledge. These binaries – these repeating pairs of body and mind/soul, nature and culture, culture and politics, security and insecurity, mortality and immortality – are all contingent, produced in part through their repetition in

The Republic and *Politics*, but they form a historically powerful discourse that has continued to influence how we think about politics and human community.

11: THE TENSION BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE

The *polis* was therefore initially articulated in relation to concepts that have been grouped and labeled broadly as nature and culture. This relationship has remained central to attempts to understand politics as the best possible spaces, forms, and practices of human community. While the categories of nature and culture both are imbued with different specifics by different writers over time, the elements of the relationship between the two remain consistent.

Generally, concepts of nature include the recognition that humans are mortal, that there is a biological, physical, or material aspect of human being which unites us with the natural world, and particularly with animals. Our link with nature is usually identified through our physical embodiment, and nature becomes the basis for whatever unique potential human beings are seen to have. It would be easy to interpret the body as the ultimate tie that binds humans to nature, which therefore must be unbound. However, to talk of the human potential to live the communal good life is to suggest that the seeds of what is best about human being are to be found in some concept of our natural condition. Yet our "nature," when interpreted as our physical being in the world, is seen as insufficient on its own to achieve the good life. In other words, what is needed is not a break from, but a development of, natural capacities or conditions. This achievement requires the development of individual faculties and communal practices that are distinct from, and distinctly more advanced than, the world of nonhuman being.

If it is understood that the natural characteristics or qualities of humans (which are defined differently over time) form the basis of thinking about the possibility of the good

life, then it becomes clear that this good life cannot be achieved through a complete separation from the perceived natural life. Rather, it requires structuring the right relationship between this natural life and the political life that the city opens for its inhabitants. Consistently, this natural life is represented by the body and the biological processes that are seen to unite the body with nature. For Plato and Aristotle, the natural life and the practices that sustain natural life are inseparable from the bodily labours necessary to meet these needs. This bodily labour is the specific marker of all activities that belong in the private realm; however, participation in the public realm still requires a relationship with the private realm. Specifically, in both Plato and Aristotle, the individual and the city can only maintain a right constitution by maintaining the right relationship between the rational and the material, whether through the right form of relationship between the rulers and the labourers, or through the right form of relationship between the soul and the body. The body, as the means of linking human being to nature and therefore to natural potential, is a necessary condition for politics: the city cannot become a political space if it does not provide some means for ensuring that humans remain connected to the body. Thus, one's embodiment, one's desires and appetites, remains an integral experience to human being, though insufficient on its own to secure political life.

The story of politics as the *polis* clearly states that to achieve the good life, and to maintain it over time and against change, humans must develop a form of culture that fulfills our unique potential to think, reason, and remember. A fundamental feature of the development of a culture that can locate the good life is that people come to live together in communities that are more complex and interdependent than a family unit and that

offer more than mere economic or military security. The formation of sophisticated social structures, particularly the city, is seen to be crucial for our advancement toward fully human being. Dance, music, religion, agriculture, law, economic activity, and cities themselves, are evidence of our capacity to meet our natural potential. Yet again, what is uniquely natural about human being becomes the basis for thinking about human culture as at once the highest expression of our natural being, and, all too often, our distance from our natural foundations. Plato and Aristotle both emphasize this movement out of a natural condition and into complex social structures by drawing the distinction between a private sphere that tends to the needs of "mere life" – natural, biological needs and processes – and a public sphere where people come together to assure the maintenance of the "good life" of the community as a whole (or at least, for those who are permitted to enter this public realm). Here, the city as *polis* provides the space for the appropriate forms and practices of association that can ensure stable politics by enforcing the very distinction between public and private.

It is precisely the development of complex, structured societies that pulls us further and further away from the assumed originary condition, further and further away from nature, which risks that we will lose what is natural about human being. Plato emphasizes this movement by drawing a distinction between the necessitous city, the one that can provide for the basic material needs of its inhabitants, and the luxurious city, the one that at once provides an appropriately human level of cultural comforts, and simultaneously brings the threats of needing more than one city can produce (Plato, 1992: 372a-374b). Aristotle sees the city that grows too large as being unable to provide the good life for its citizens; it may "be self-sufficient in the matter of material necessities (as

a nation may be) but it will not be a city, since it can hardly have a constitution" (Aristotle: 1326[a]25), where a constitution must be understood not just as the rules that govern the city, but as a shared way of living that gives an identity to the city. Human culture, in the particular form of the city, can therefore be seen as the other necessary condition for the development of the space where the good life can flourish, and hence for the development of political life. However, it also becomes clear that the city itself cannot ensure the good life. Too many forces are at work that disrupt this life and threaten it with perversion or disintegration.

Within this line of thinking, the *polis*, the force of politics, is only possible in a context where human community has developed such that it uses consciousness and rationality as the basis for organization, but has not developed in such a way that members of the community are so separated from nature that their forms of organization no longer align with what is natural. While politics needs culture, as exemplified by the city, to open the possibility of the good life, the city requires the right political structures and practices if the potential of the good life is to be fulfilled over time. And while the political realm insists that the desires, feelings, and appetites of the body are guided or ruled by reason, reason must still exist in a relationship with the body. Thus nature and culture are represented as both the possibility of politics and the threat to politics thus defined. The original discourse of the *polis* develops and promotes the idea that to be properly political – to have access to the good life of the community – you have to resolve this tension between nature and culture. Both must necessarily be present to achieve a political space, form, and practice, but each threatens the ability to achieve the other, and thus constantly threatens the possibility of achieving the *polis*.

Paradoxically, the *polis* is required to ensure that this proper relationship between nature and culture can be maintained by a group of people over time. It is through the right constitution, the right laws and modes of living, that this resolution is established and the stability of the community ensured. The story of the *polis* therefore links stability to the ability to identify, develop, and maintain the "right" relationship between "nature" and "culture," though the actual form of this resolution, and the actual claims regarding what form of relationship is "right" vary among thinkers and over time. In all cases, stability becomes the basis for judging the success of the community and the rightness of the authority. However, if we examine the cause of this perpetual insecurity, we see that it is due to the way that politics is being defined. The conditions that are necessary for the achievement of politics are the conditions that always threaten politics: the threat that nature and culture pose to the good life is an inescapable aspect of any attempt to instantiate the good life, precisely because it has been defined as the community that can balance or integrate nature and culture, seen as inseparable and in tension. Thus it becomes necessary to recognize that the insecurity that politics fights so desperately to control is embedded into the concept of political community that is intended to be secured.

Within the delineated space of the city – the space that was conceived, in the original story of the *polis*, as the appropriate space for politics – this tension is expressed in terms of a tension between the city, as a marker of human culture (uniquely human nature for abstract thought), and the body, as the connection with non-human, biological nature. As we have begun to see, political theory has continually attempted to deal with the security/insecurity dilemma posed by nature and culture by delineating the

relationship necessary between the city and the body to achieve political organization. This is why images of the city and the body are central to the original accounts of the *polis* as presented by Plato and Aristotle, and in other accounts that follow. Although we can link the body to nature, and the city to culture, it is clear from reading Plato and Aristotle that these are not absolute equivalences or absolute distinctions. The relationship is more complex, interdependent, and ambiguous: they are synecdochic of the central puzzle of human being and human interaction that Plato and Aristotle, and political theorists that come after, all attempt to address. The city and the body figure as the root of the specific problems of stability, in other words, as the tension that necessitates politics; and as the forms through which politics is supposed to be able to secure human community, in other words, secure politics itself. Hence we get the consistent phrasing of politics as the embodied, material affairs of the people, exemplified by the complex and physical life of the city, as well as the body itself; and simultaneously see the phrasing of politics as the aspiration to some form of metaphysical truth, abstract reason, and natural (essential) law, that can guide the material conditions and affairs.

These distinctions are frequently played out in a further conceptual division, this time between politics and philosophy as practices of knowledge and truth. As Karsten Harries notes in *Infinity and Perspective* (2001), this distinction between physical, material affairs as a political concern, and abstract metaphysical knowledge as a philosophical concern, is as old as Plato:

> Consider the anecdote Plato tells us in the Theaetetus about Thales, the traditional founder of philosophy. Socrates here is speaking not only of Thales but also of himself, indeed of all true philosophers: they all have little interest in the city and its affairs: "He is not even aware that

> he knows nothing of all this, for if he holds aloof, it is not for reputation's sake, but because it is really his body that sojourns in his city, while his thought, disdaining all such things as worthless, takes wings, as Pindar says, 'beyond the sky, beneath the earth,' searching the heavens and measuring the plains, everywhere seeking the true nature of everything as a whole, never sinking to what lies close at hand." (Harries, 2001: 144)

It is then significant that both the body and the city are representative of the difficulty of embodiment and materiality that politics must deal with, while philosophy is represented as the way to true knowledge of nature. As we have seen, establishing political community requires just this claim to knowledge about nature, as well as the additional claim to be able to materialize or embody these abstract truths in human form and human culture. Thus it is impossible to think of politics and philosophy independently. Rather, they play out the same tension held by nature and culture, the city and the body, only this time, in the context of the abstracted ideal versus the embodied instance.

Hence, the city and the body are the necessary ground of politics, precisely because politics is defined as the need to structure forms of human association that are embodied, phenomenal, worldly, and at best, immortal (to follow Arendt's [1958] distinction). And they are simultaneously the greatest threat to stable politics, because in order to achieve and maintain the good life, political knowledge must abstract from the body, develop rational culture, and access the metaphysical truths of nature. There are multiple ironies here. In order to achieve proper politics, we must leave politics and enter philosophy. In order to learn how to live in our bodies and in the material world, we must disembody ourselves and access objective, transcendental truths. The only way to achieve stability and security in the physical realm of human community is to rely on the metaphysical, whether in the form of the truly noumenal to which Plato and Aristotle

appeal, or the Kantian *a priori*, rational laws that can give order and structure to the phenomena (a development that we will explore later). While Arendt, looking back on Greek descriptions of the *polis*, claims that in the end both Plato and Aristotle are more interested in philosophy (and thus contemplation and eternity) than politics (and thus active life and immortality), it seems instead as though politics poses a problem precisely because it does not easily restrict itself to immortality rather than eternity or otherworldliness. Politics appears endlessly problematic and unstable precisely because it is defined as the attempt to unite the metaphysical and the physical, through the claims to resolve the tensions between nature and culture, philosophy and politics, body and city.

The pervasive, concrete effects of these conceptual relationships are traced through time by Richard Sennett in *Flesh and Stone: the Body and the City in Western Civilization* (1994). Sennett focuses on attempts to inscribe "master images" of the body – collective, generic images of the human body – onto the built form of the city (Sennett, 1994: 23). Sennett argues that master images of the body have been linked, through concepts such as the body politic, to attempts to construct and maintain proper social order. Over time, ideas of how the body worked and how it should look were consistently used as the basis for structuring the space of the city, delineating right forms of constitutions for the city, and organizing right practices of association. As we have seen, these practices required not only the right behaviours between people, but also more fundamentally the right association of the self to the body. In other words, the city has attempted to ensure political stability through the very practical embodiment of an idealized or abstracted political form. This embodiment encompasses the physical structures of the city itself, the institutional structures that guide its social and political

interactions, and the lived experience and practices of its inhabitants. Yet, as Sennett describes, the very language of the master image of the body and its attempted materialization in the city forces the recognition that no particular body can perfectly conform to the master image. Hence, "[t]he city has served as a site of power, its spaces made coherent and whole in the image of man himself. [But] the city has also served as the space in which these master images have cracked apart" (Sennett, 1994: 25). What Sennett raises is the tension between the idealized body and social order that form the basis of thinking about the *polis* and the threats and instabilities that are inherent in any attempt to embody these ideals in particular individuals and cities.

Sennett perfectly encapsulates the depth of the conundrum facing politics as the embodiment of the *polis*, the communal good life. Following this interpretation, politics is not only a type of activity by a type of actor within a given space. Rather, it is concerned with the originary act of structuring spaces that will enable us to live together, progressing beyond a base natural condition while not changing or corrupting what is natural about us. This structuring act conceives and promotes a right relationship with the needs and feelings of the body and a right form of social interaction. Politics, in this reading, requires establishing and securing a space or practice or condition that derives its potential for order from nature but that must embody a uniquely human culture to be political.

It is not merely human frailty that needs yet exposes the impossibility of laws as limitations and boundaries, but the ongoing need to connect human political action to a foundation that can be based on a concept of metaphysical nature, or more generally, metaphysical truth. This creates the tension that is so evident within Western political

thought: competing, unresolved characterizations as the city as order versus the urban as disorder, and the stability of the ideal body politic versus the threatening natural disorder of the particular body. Within this contradictory formulation, these threats must be risked if there is to be politics, if there is to be the good life, and yet the only possibility of avoiding the threat is to find the perfect, perpetual resolution. According to the logic initiated by this conceptualization of politics, the only possible way forward is to fix the right relationship between nature and politics, the city and the body, in both space and time, to secure political community.

The repeated images of the city and the body therefore are echoes of a much more fundamental tension, where politics is set up as the (impossible) resolution between nature and culture, phenomena and noumena, and physical and metaphysical. It is the force that attempts to impose the idealized, abstract vision onto the material, embodied instance, doomed to failure because the idealized vision is idealized for its abstraction from the material. The inevitable failure of politics thus defined comes from precisely this attempt to secure the phenomenal, the embodied, the actual, against change by attempting to impose upon it a model derived from claims regarding the metaphysical, unchanging truth of nature and culture.

As we learn from Sennett, the inscription of the body on the city in terms of master-images is one more attempt to materialize the idealized metaphysical into an embodied instance. That these master-images break apart continually over time as a result of the discrepancy between the abstraction and each person's embodied experience only adds to this sense of insecurity. This insecurity generates increasing suspicion of the actual body, as the feature or element that seems most closely to tie us to animals and to

phenomenal nature, and increasing appeals to a revised abstraction. Thus there is the continual turn to the metaphysical body, whether the abstract master-image of individual bodies, or the abstract concept of the body politic, which becomes the basis for or symbol of the ontological claims being made. The idealized body is seen as the means through which the metaphysics of nature can be materialized, thus bringing stability and authority to the city, as the built environmental, and the human community, as the intangible political space. Hence the image of the body remains critical in descriptions of the stable, healthy city and the stable, political community, even while the materiality of the body is repeatedly considered to be the greatest threat to each.

12: COMMUNITY, DISCOURSE, METAPHYSICS

I have claimed that central to the problem of suburban sprawl are the discursive practices that produce community in particular forms. From this claim, I have proposed that suburban sprawl presents us with two crucial political problems: first, the discourse of ideal community is linked to original conceptions of the political as the problem of defining, instituting, and securing the good life of a complex social group; second, discursive practices are important as political problems because they involve claims to authority. I have further claimed that these problems have been constructed as inter-related within this discourse of politics as ideal community, politics as the good life, politics as the *polis*.

To say that metaphysical nature should be a source of authority in the organization of human practices – as Plato and Aristotle both do – is to make the problematic claim of a relationship between nature and the forms of human community under investigation. This claim assumes that there is a uniquely human character or potential that is given by the metaphysics of nature and that the appropriate relationship between human nature and human culture is that the latter should conform to the dictates of the former. This effectively draws the distinction between some forms of culture that are obviously human, but not "properly" human; in other words, some cultural practices do not conform to the claims regarding what is uniquely and naturally human, and thus are not fit to be labeled "political" forms of association or ways of living. Whether Plato's distinction between societies organized around heroic myth and poetry and properly political societies organized by philosopher kings according to the metaphysical,

universal forms of nature, or Aristotle's distinction between the complex but unconscious sociality of the village or the nation and the complex, self-conscious sociality of the *polis*, which is the natural and therefore properly political culture for human beings, it is clear that the construction of the *polis* depends upon concepts of nature and culture to define politics. Thus, we arrive at a point where politics is conceived in terms of, conceived as relying on, and conceived as distinct from, both nature and culture.

We are thus able to see how nature becomes the ultimate authority in making political claims: the claimed stability of metaphysical nature is the basis for thinking about the possibility of organizing human community in a form that is not vulnerable to the threat of change or dissolution; human potential is grounded in a concept of what is naturally and uniquely human, and this is the basis of the ability to organize human society in a form that is both natural and yet distinct from animal associations; and thus two powerful claims regarding the nature of nature – metaphysical nature and phenomenal nature – are at the heart of claims to be able to know and institute a correct form of politics. This claim regarding nature relies further on the notion that there is an essential or metaphysical stability in nature itself, a noumenal truth that can be discovered, learned, known, and materialized. Yet within the same story we are able to see how nature becomes the ultimate form of depoliticization: when nature is conceived in essential, metaphysical terms, then the truth of nature holds an objective existence outside, and prior to, human attempts to understand it. In this context, when politics is defined as the attempt to organize the best possible human community according to the requirements of nature, politics is made to come after nature, to depend on nature. Thus,

to claim that something is natural is to take it outside the dictated space, form, or practice of politics. If an aspect of human activity or human community is labeled natural, then the political possibilities are constrained to the choice of whether we will allow it or use our rationality and mechanisms of control to disallow it. This formulation forecloses the possibilities of asking how nature has been defined, by whom, and for what purpose. In other words, it removes the act of claiming the authority to know what nature is from the realm of political analysis.

This definition of politics in relation to nature is paralleled by the definition of politics in relation to culture. On the one hand, culture, as a form of human interaction that can be distinguished from a purely animal, natural, base interaction, is the necessary grounds of politics. This definition is at the root of a long history of political discrimination and disenfranchisement, where labeling a people or group as bound by nature, insufficiently cultured, becomes the basis for denying the possibility of political equivalence. One only need remember the Okanagan Nation – removed from their traditional territory of *S-Ookanhkchinx*, without a treaty or other form of political negotiation or conquest, in favour of pioneers who would "make the region more livable" by cultivating the land and bringing culture to the people – to see how pervasive and serious are the consequences of this claimed grounds for politics. On the other hand, as politics is restricted by definition to the explicit, self-conscious, rational attempts to constitute ideal community according to the requirements of nature, to label a practice as cultural is to open it to depoliticization, as only some forms of cultural structures and practices are considered suitable to be labeled political. Thus a wide range of human actions and interactions become defined as existing outside a delineated sphere of the

political. These merely cultural practices tend to be perceived as private affairs that should not be subject to interference by others in the community; or, they are perceived as the successful flowering of the stable, appropriately political community; or finally, they are perceived as external, undisciplined threats to political community. Most often, paradoxically, practices that are labeled cultural, in opposition to a concept of the political, are made to inhabit one or more of these apolitical spaces. Further, because culture is a necessary ground for politics, politics has been made to come after the ability to demonstrate a degree of cultural sophistication (determined by those who claiming definitional authority). Thus culture, too, is made to exist outside of, and prior to, politics.

As we have seen, then, there is a problem in the way that the definitions of and distinctions between nature and culture are used simultaneously to politicize and depoliticize these concepts. We also see, however, that these definitions and distinctions succeed in depoliticizing claims to the knowledge of these terms and their changing significations. The depoliticization of knowledge claims as claims to political authority is derived from the definitions of both nature and culture. Politics, in the story of the *polis*, is the acts or laws that structure human individual and communal constitutions according to the requirements of an essential, metaphysical nature. Thus this story of politics depoliticizes any of the claims regarding what this nature is, because it is seen to be outside human existence. Yet the commitment to a concept of knowledge as the basis of authority is made within a particular ideal of the role of cultural practices within human community. Within this ideal, knowledge is objective, disinterested, and concerned first and foremost with discovering what is true. This depoliticization is solidified in the distinction noted earlier between philosophy, as the love of knowledge or learning, and

politics, as the concern for the organization of human community to achieve the good life. Clearly, right from Plato's claim that stories of the gods that emphasize revenge, violence, and interference in human affairs cannot be true, must not be believed, and therefore must be excised from the political community, these competing knowledge claims form the basis of claims regarding the ideal spaces, forms, and practices of politics.

Paradoxically, these convoluted efforts to establish an incontrovertible, invulnerable authority on which to establish the perfectly secure political community succeed only in constructing a community that will always fall short of the demands of its idealized abstraction. This problem is derived from how the concept or definition of politics that is forwarded in the story of the *polis* depends on the ability to resolve the perceived tension between nature and culture. This construction, which requires the institution in a worldly community of a constitution that is possible only in an abstracted, metaphysical form – "there is a model of it in heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees," as Plato informs us (Plato, 592b)[23] – makes the achievement of this ideal impossible. Thus the conception of political community in these terms spurs the continual search for new attempts at formulating the ideal and new attempts at embodying this (ever-shifting) idealized constitution. In other words, this conception embeds insecurity in the concept that is made to seek for security, a conundrum that underlies the continual efforts to reinstitute the *polis* in the face of failed institutions of the *polis*.

13: THE *POLIS* IN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

The Highpointe website claims to offer prospective buyers "a place where natural space blends with all the comforts of the modern world" (The View). I have suggested that much of the appeal of this claim is to be found in initial articulations of ideal human community as the resolution of nature and culture in the *polis*, and that therefore contemporary urban sprawl can be seen as an attempt to build political community on the model of the *polis*. Yet this quote reminds us of the discursive category that is the extensive, if variable, concept of "the modern world." It is clear that the *polis* as described by the ancient Greeks is *not* the modern world, and while sprawl may have roots in ways of thinking about community that were first articulated in the ancient world, it is also a phenomenon firmly planted in contemporary times. There is not the space here to do a full investigation of how the myriad changes that have taken place over the intervening 2,500 years have influenced the precise spaces, forms, and practices of political community that sprawl embodies. And further, the purpose here is to emphasize a line of similarity, rather than focus on the obvious (or even not-so-obvious) differences. However, it is necessary to briefly touch on a few significant moments that can help us understand features of sprawl that do not fit easily within the constructs of the initial *polis* discourse.[24]

Tracing the move of the development of the *polis* discourse from ancient Greek origins to classically modern re-articulations would present a story about similarities and differences, continuities and discontinuities, agreements and disagreements.[25] There are three major changes that are particularly relevant to this story: in the move from ancient

Greece to something that became widely recognized as "the modern world," we came to see the world in a different way, we came to see ourselves in a different way, and we came to see politics in a different way, such that to use any of these terms – world, politics, even us – is to encapsulate a large and complex history of revision, change, and contention.

First, there is the problem of how to think about nature, in particular the nature of the world. Within this problem are questions regarding astronomy and cosmology, mathematics and geometry, and natural philosophy, all of which came to be grouped under the label "science." In particular, we can read the changes in thinking about nature in the early modern period, introduced by figures such as Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, as critical not only because they radically change the concept of the natural world, but because they do so in an attempt to come to terms with motion and change as an essential aspect of nature (Crombie, 1952: 45-46; Hall, 1963: 36-39).[26] Just as Plato and Aristotle were concerned with metaphysical stability as the essence of nature, from which the stability of human culture and human community could be derived, investigations into the nature of motion were critical in establishing the modern concept of the universe: these investigations established the cosmology of the heliocentric, and then centreless infinite universe; they lead to the invention of the calculus (claimed by both Newton and Leibniz); and they lead ultimately to the acceptance of the Newtonian universe of absolute space and time. The transition in their thinking moves away from the commitment to a knowable, objectively true metaphysics of nature – the Platonic or Aristotelian noumena – towards a belief in the essential unknowability of a noumenal nature, the cause behind the seeming chaos of natural phenomena. Only seeming, now,

though, because Newton, in developing a mathematical explanation from which all phenomena could be deduced, brought order to the natural world:

> There could be only one moment at which experiment and observation, the mechanical philosophy, and advanced mathematical methods could be brought together to yield a system of thought at once tightly consistent in itself and verifiable by every available empirical test. Order could be brought to celestial physics only once, and it was Newton who brought order. His is the world of law…Yet Newton shrank from the belief that these laws are innate in nature; that in his view would lead to necessitarianism and the deification of matter. …matter is, and the laws of nature are, because God has willed them. The perfection of the laws implied for him a lawgiver, as the perfection of the architecture of the universe implied a cosmic design. (Hall, 1963: 301, 303).

While Newton maintained a belief in a metaphysical power behind the natural forces that he investigated, he continually claimed that knowledge of this power was impossible, and that human knowledge could only posit *a priori* principles from which more or less accurate laws of natural movement could be deduced, from which the observable phenomena could be more or less accurately explained (Crombie, 1952: 397-398). The laws of motion may, in Newton's view, have been set into play by a metaphysical power, but in an important sense, the lawgiver that brings order is the human thinker, the human with the capacity to posit the *a priori* principles, deduce the laws of motion, and thus recreate the chaotic, unpredictable world of phenomenal nature into the universe as an ordered system of phenomena extending in absolute time and space. Newton thus heralds the modern era not merely because he makes rationality essential to the identification or basis of the laws that underlie movement or change in natural phenomena, but because he makes human rationality the central, creative source of these laws.

The changing propositions of how and where to locate stability or order in the natural world are intimately connected with the re-articulation of the *polis* as the space,

form, and practice of politics as the nation-state. The development of thinking about politics at the outset of the modern age is characterized by attempts to deal with the instability of competing or overlapping city-states and multiple levels of worldly and spiritual authority by developing and perfecting singular, temporal, territorial sovereign authorities within the new concepts of absolute, and therefore measurable and distinguishable, space and time. Thus we see the scale of politics shift from the city to the nation-state. With this comes the move to characterize culture, society, and the urban as conditions of life within the political space of the state, and international relations in the space without, a move that enables the framing of ideal community in sprawl as apolitical. This combining of absolute space and time into the context or condition of political community also enables the production of a new relationship between time and space, where progress becomes a clearly articulated alternative to tradition, and where the space of progress becomes coextensive with the space of the city, while tradition resides in the country. Thus, the thinking that enables a spatial and temporal analytical distinction to be drawn between the urban and the rural is intimately bound up with thinking the *polis* on the scale of the nation-state.

The questions regarding nature and the world are paralleled by questions of the human body, specifically the relationship between embodiment, experience, and the human senses and the possibility of knowledge of the physical and metaphysical nature of the world. This leads to the third problem, of how to think about political culture, conceived both in terms of human knowledge and human community – in other words, the problem of who "we" are as human and political beings. Within the revised conception of the *polis*, the political individual becomes reconceived as the sovereign,

universal citizen, equally subject before the political sovereign and therefore autonomous in what are left to be his private actions. While it is difficult to open this topic without reference to Hobbes, Locke, or many other crucial theorists of the period, for the purposes here it is enough to briefly consider Rousseau and Kant, because the former is one of the last modern theorists to remain committed to a concept of the city-state in his articulation of sovereignty, and because the latter presents the first clear articulation of the modern state system and the reduction of human knowledge to the realm of phenomena. Both, though creating and working within concepts of the world and nature, politics, and subjectivity that are significantly different from the ancient Greek notions, and though significantly different from each other, can be read as modern attempts to reconstruct politics as the *polis*, as the force or practice that can, and should, institute the stable community through the right organization or resolution of the ongoing tension between nature and culture.

In considering the possibility that the scale of political community should properly be held to the city-state rather than the increasingly dominant conceptual and geographical scale of the nation-state, Rousseau maintains a close affinity to Greek articulations of the *polis*, with their identifications of the ideal community as the city. Rousseau defines a continuum where nature is equated with purity and authenticity and culture is equated with, at its best, the laws that can maintain the equality of nature in a social setting, and at worst, urbanizing and over-civilizing tendencies that institute inequality as a political necessity. Rousseau defines the challenge of structuring the political community as finding a way to live together that does not pervert or unnecessarily destroy the natural freedom and equality of human being. His ongoing

critique of European society of his time (with the exception of Geneva) is that it has developed in ways that destroy, or at least bury, the natural self-concern and concern for others that have to be at the heart of any communal good life. In contemporary cities, he complains, "[w]e have physicists, geometers, chemists, astronomers, poets, musicians, painters; we no longer have citizens. Or, if there still are some left to us, dispersed in our abandoned countryside, they perish there indigent and despised" (Rousseau, 1987a: 17). It is the ultimate reversal of the dream of the city as *polis* if the only true citizen is to be found not in the city but in the surrounding countryside.

Politics can only lead to the good life, according to Rousseau, if the urbanization of the body can be stripped away. He admires Geneva precisely because he feels that it manages to combine equality and inequality in "a manner that most closely approximates the natural law and that is most favourable to the society, to the maintenance of public order and to the happiness of private individuals" (Rousseau, 1987b: 26). All citizens can identify this natural law, and it does not require philosophy, metaphysics, sciences, or culture, the hallmarks of urbanization. "Is it not enough, in order to learn [the laws of virtue], to commune with oneself and, in the silence of the passions, to listen to the voice of one's conscience?" (Rousseau, 1987a: 21). The authentic, natural human must be re-embodied individually and constitutionally in a political community that returns the city to the ordered *polis* and the citizen to his role of supporting and maintaining the good life for all. The social compact that Rousseau proposes is intended to ensure equality by embodying all perceptions, desires, and perspectives in one civic body that can take the needs and wants of all into account when making decisions; this embodiment is critical, because it enables the needs of individual citizens to be not merely represented, but

experienced and appreciated by the whole (Rousseau, 1987c). The sovereign will that is created through the social contract is intended to be the unifying embodiment that eliminates inequality and its attendant luxuries, injustices, and fundamental disembodiment: the general will is only possible so long as the proper relationship with the body and its inherent experience of pity and concern can be maintained, not only at the individual level, but within the constitution of the city. Thus, Rousseau attempts to secure a stable space for politics by prioritizing the experience of embodiment within the city, both for each individual and as integral parts of the civic body itself.

Kant, who began his academic career by carefully studying both Newton's concepts and his methods and publishing a text that was intended to "vindicate Newtonian science philosophically" (Reiss, 1970/1991: 1-2), refigured the concepts of nature and culture yet again, and thus necessitated a different political resolution. For Kant, nature was shown by Kepler and Newton to work by axiomatic laws in the realm of physical phenomena (Kant, 1970/1991a: 42), and therefore should be assumed to work by similar laws in the realm of human phenomena. Whereas the laws of nature that Newton proposes explain a movement that continues without change – the movement of the physical bodies in the universe according to the law of gravity – Kant's law of nature proposes to explain a movement that leads to constant change – the movement of human cultures through time. Worried by the possibility that this might be a purely random or unguided movement, Kant suggests that the only rational explanation for the phenomena of human activity in the world is to assume that nature has made humans to possess instincts and desires that are shared with animals but to be unique in our capacity for free independent action guided by reason. If the task is to understand the laws of nature that

underlie human activity, then Kant's answer is that nature works through human instinct and self-interest to develop human reason, and therefore mature moral culture (Kant, 1970/1991a: 49). As each human is mortal, it becomes impossible to see this perfectability of human reason on the scale of the individual, or in the present; rather, our assumed immortality as a species becomes the basis for the claim that the development of reason is a spatial and temporal process within the absolute extension of the universe (Kant, 1970/1991a: 42-43, 50-51). Kant therefore takes the Newtonion concept of the *a priori* principles that can make sense of the phenomena and shifts them so that man himself is the Newtonian law-giver, and human reason is the perfect cause that imposes order on the world:

> It is admittedly a strange and at first sight absurd proposition to write a *history* according to an idea of how world events must develop if they are to conform to certain rational ends; it would seem that only a *novel* could result from such premises. Yet if it may be assumed that nature does not work without a plan and a purposeful end, even amidst the arbitrary play of human freedom, this idea might nevertheless be useful. And although we are too short-sighted to perceive the hidden mechanism of nature's scheme, this idea may yet serve as a guide to us in representing an otherwise planless *aggregate* of human actions as conforming, at least when considered as a whole, to a *system*. (Kant, 1970/1991a: 51-52; emphases in original)

Just as Newton gives the laws that bring order to the cosmos, Kant makes human reason the lawgiver that can bring order to human existence in the world; thus, reason itself becomes the source of laws of human nature, human existence, and human community. In other words, reason becomes the ordering force of human phenomena, and thus the source or basis of political community and political authority.

Thus, the resolution between nature and culture, chaos and order, embodiment and reason, that Kant proposes requires nature to work teleologically at the level of the

human species. The tension between human nature and human culture, between human death and human community, can be resolved now if we think in terms of the development of the species. The form of human community that can put us on the correct path to this universal resolution is the all-encompassing nation-state. The metaphysical truth of reason is achieved on earth by being part of the species. Kant therefore transfigures the accounts of the *polis* that we have seen so far by making stability or security not a *lack* of change, but a change that is ruled by a natural, rational law of improvement. Just as an *a priori* principle can explain the movements of the planets and the tides, an *a priori* principle can explain the movements of humans and communities. The threat to this stability is therefore a lack of reason or a lack of necessary development of reason. Yet Kant makes this insecurity, and the insecurities noted by others, into the natural mechanism for this progress: phenomenal insecurity on its own is no longer just a threat, but is also the very source of our achievements, as it is the experience of insecurity that forces us to learn ever-better ways of governing ourselves (Kant, 1970/1991a: 44). This process of learning and improving, for Kant, is the rational point of our existence. Worldly insecurity is not due to our separation from the metaphysical nature but is rather the necessary means by which this metaphysical nature works through us. Thus the political challenge is to develop a social order that can keep this insecurity ordered to maximize progress. While the nation-state is the necessary form of political community in the present, Kant's resolution of nature and culture seeks to establish not just a political community in terms of where one lives, but a universal political condition: the cosmopolis, literally the *polis* that extends through the universe and is universally valid, as is the natural law of gravity (Kant, 1970/1991a: 45, 51). This resolution is threatened

fundamentally by Kant's own acknowledgement that we can never know if this described process of species development towards cosmopolitan peace is really what is happening; but, as he says, "if we assume a plan of nature, we have grounds for greater hopes" that our perfectability can be achieved in worldly, and thus political, terms, rather than having to look beyond earth "to some other world" (Kant, 1970/1991a: 52-53).

Interestingly, Kant draws the distinction between the *citoyen*, the citizen who is a member of and a participant in the state and thus the practices of the development of reasoned moral culture, and the *bourgeois*, who is merely a civilized member or inhabitant of the city (Kant, 1970/1991b: 77-78). As an implicit response to Rousseau's commitment to the possibility of the city-state remaining a viable sovereign authority in the developing new world order, Kant confidently forecloses this possibility and thus can be read as a culmination in classical modern thinking about politics. Although with Kant we see the space of political community shift (in analytical terms at least) to the state, the city in many ways retains political significance. For example, from Sennett we learn how cities were and still are built and envisioned according to images of the body (he notes revolutionary and post-revolutionary France as one context, and contemporary cities and transportation systems as another), even as language of the "body politic" shifts conceptually to the state. At the same time, even as the Kantian ideal of the rational sovereign individual becomes conceptually dominant, Foucault helps us to understand the myriad techniques by which this concept of the modern subject has been imposed on the embodied particular subject. And for all that Rousseau and Kant each develop sophisticated attempts to replace the instability of previous political communities with a renewed concept of the *polis* and a renewed promise of metaphysical security, we can see

that neither the embodiment of natural authenticity nor the universal development of reason has proven to offer the stability that they claimed.

While the modern age therefore brought significant difference to concepts of nature and the world, political community, and human subjectivity, part of the usefulness of noting these differences is in recognizing how they can also be read within the narrative of nature and culture, security and insecurity, abstracted metaphysics and particular embodiment, that is so present in the original *polis* discourse. This repetition of these concepts and relationships in the discourses of modernity, and in modern attempts to institute the nation-state as the renewed *polis*, suggests the centrality of this problematic, and makes it easier to understand sprawl as one more attempt to resolve a political problem that has been constructed in irresolvable terms.

Of course, despite what the advertisement for Highpointe seeks to claim in its invocation of "the modern," our contemporary times are no longer fully committed to the goals and discursive productions of the modern age. With the range of challenges to and reconfigurations of modern concepts of the world (as Einsteinian relativity, for example), concepts of the individual (as subjectivities), and politics (as fragmented power or authority, both broader and more diffuse than the conceptual and territorial confines of the nation), to complete the story of the transition from the ancient Greek *polis* to the sprawling *polis* of contemporary times, we would need to analyze the turn to what is called discourse, or deconstruction, or the post-modern. While there are many explanations for this turn, it can be seen in part as a response to the instability of the resolution of nature and culture in the state. The disillusionment with the modern state as successful *polis* can perhaps be connected with the malaise or nihilism that is seen by

writers such as Koyré, Arendt, and Harries (responding to figures such as Nietzsche and Heidegger) as the inherent response to modernity. There seem to be two main responses to this contemporary instability. On the one hand, there are repeated indications of the same response to re-impose – re-impose the state over failed states, to re-impose the transcendental subject over the disintegrating sovereign individual, or to re-impose the natural organization of the market over the chaotic collapses of global capital. The other move is to revel in the constructedness, the contingency, and the mutability of nature and culture: to understand the techniques of construction and still want to participate in the constructed. Thus in contemporary settings there is often present a tension between the desire to re-impose the modern solution and the desire to recognize discursive productions and fractured or particular embodiments. The spaces, forms, and practices of political community are envisioned and debated on a much more varied scale than was acknowledged through the classical modern era, even as the desire to construct human community and a concept of politics in the image of the *polis* remains surprisingly present. We can see this tension within the particular problem of suburban sprawl, where an implicit recognition of efforts of construction in materializing the ideal community, and an understanding of the constructed nature of these communities, is matched by an almost naïve commitment to the possibility of achieving this ideal community – if only the troubling problem of nature and culture can be finally, and securely, resolved. Within this tension between the modern and the contemporary, echoes of the original *polis* consistently sound.

14: HOW OKANAGAN SPRAWL RECONSTRUCTS THE *POLIS*

This analysis started by describing some of the analytical problems that sprawl poses: how, in seeking the border zone between the city and the country-side, sprawl seems to contain an internal drive continually to envelop the non-urban within the urban; how, in the generation of a myriad of serious economic, ecological, social, and political problems from what was supposed to be a solution to the problems of the contemporary city, sprawl seems to replay an ongoing dynamic of problems and solutions; how, in claiming to be able to build the ideal community for residents, sprawl repeats the language of the *polis*, even as it resolutely denies any political aspect to this project. We can now begin to see how these more particular problems, which might appear to be isolated, specific, and purely contemporary, can be understood as merely one more symptom of the tensions and paradoxes contained within attempts to define and construct political community in the Western tradition.

The problems that sprawl presents to us point us to the tensions built into the initial articulations of politics as the *polis*. This way of reading the story of politics brings to light a relationship between forms of authority, as the metaphysics of politics, and forms of community, as the embodiment of politics. The problems of sprawl are generated out of the relationships that link authority to community through the continued appeal to a metaphysic of truth. The repetition of these relationships is reproduced in the discourse of suburban sprawl, through the repetition of the notion that nature and culture must be structured to resolve the tension between them to achieve stability in the community. As we re-read the advertisements for sprawling developments in the

Okanagan, we see that nature and culture figure prominently in the claims to present ideal community. This suggests that the *form of authority* embedded within the claims to community that are made through sprawl is an authority derived from this conceptual relationship, this series of contingent tensions between nature and culture, stability and insecurity, metaphysical and worldly, idealized abstraction and vulnerable embodiment. The *form of community* claimed as ideal in the discourse of sprawl connects to the same set of relationships, often transposed in terms of rural and urban, country-side and city.

The emphasis on the importance of nature is present throughout advertisements for real estate in the Okanagan. Whisper Ridge Real Estate, in Coldstream, exhorts potential buyers to "[l]et nature be your lifestyle!" (Home). At Wilden, in north Kelowna, potential buyers are invited to "[b]e part of nature in Kelowna's newest hillside neighbourhood…including parks, ponds, and trails. …[Wilden] is laced with secluded lakes, wetlands, and hiking trails" (Home). The Lakes provides "[b]reathtaking views of lakes, mountains, orchards, and vineyards…inter-connecting trails, park space, scenic lake and water-fall" (About The Lakes). Further, The Lakes claims to offer "a peaceful, top-of-the-world retreat overlooking the forest-covered hillsides, lush orchards, thriving vineyards, rolling pastures, and sparkling lakes of magnificent Lake Country" (Living in Lake Country), repeating the distinction between a natural condition or environment and one dominated by human cultural (for which read urban, not agricultural) activity. On the Highpointe website, the introduction blends synthetic, hypnotic music and images of hillsides, sunshine, lakes, and wild animals with an evocative description of the region: "…The drama of the sculpted landscape leaves you breathless. Snow-capped mountains.

Rolling fruit orchards. Verdant vineyards. Secluded meadows bursting with wildflowers. Indigo lakes warmed by over two thousand hours of annual sunlight" (The View).

In these ads, nature is not only an aesthetic or recreational experience; it forms the basis for how the community should be envisioned, designed, and developed. Whisper Ridge describes how "[f]rom the discovery of this Okanagan Valley park-like forest land with intertwined trails, mountain fed streams and abundant wildlife in Vernon BC a vision was created…to design a limited selection of residential real estate home sites where nature governed every element of planning and was never taken for granted" (Home; ellipses in original). Again, at Wilden, nature becomes a means of structuring the community, as their "[s]mall and cozy neighbourhoods [are] secluded by natural boundaries like hills, open spaces, lakes and parks" (Vision). At The Lakes, "[s]pecial care has been taken to preserve the natural beauty and landscape" (About The Lakes), so that the community plan can be claimed to fit within an existing, and remaining, natural environment. Finally, at Highpointe, the colours, textures, and forms of the landscape are meant to dictate the form of the built community by becoming the basis of strict architectural style codes to create the "correct" house structures (Home Styles).

Against these idealized descriptions of the nature of the Okanagan Valley are placed equally idealized descriptions of the urban culture in which Valley residents can participate. In a few instances, the elements of human culture include mentions of schools, work opportunities, public transit, and other practical aspects of interaction – aspects that Plato or Aristotle would have classified as part of the private realm of necessity. Whisper Ridge includes a page on the social and economic demographics of

Vernon (The City), and The Lakes highlights entrepreneur and employment opportunities – after all, residents are only "a short, scenic commute north or south…to the commerce of the neighbouring larger centres of Vernon or Kelowna" (Living in Lake Country). Most often, however, the elements of cultural activity that are emphasized are those related to leisure or lifestyle, such as arts, restaurant dining, shopping, or golf. For example, Highpointe claims as one of its selling points that you can "[s]ip your way along the wine route, savour BC's finest dining at the many estate wineries and later, stroll the artwalk in Kelowna's colourful Cultural District" (Activities). Wilden emphasizes that Kelowna has "the amenities of a major centre including a world-class cultural district, downtown waterfront, regional hospital and great shopping to name just a few" (Kelowna and Area). This is followed by a map of the area that locates such "amenities" as the airport, local wineries, parks, shopping, golf, skiing, and so on, all helpfully delineated by estimated driving times (Local Amenities). Whisper Ridge frequently repeats its proximity to the "thriving urban centre" of Vernon, as well as the ease of flights to Vancouver and Calgary (The City). Thus, there is a clear effort to claim that these developments have access to, and contribute to, all the conveniences of the well-established city. In a move that repeats the definition of the good life presented by Plato and Aristotle, The Lakes claims that nearby communities offer "all the amenities required for complete self-sufficiency" (Living in Lake Country). The good life is clearly not guaranteed by the natural surroundings of the Okanagan Valley, but requires the additional development of a complex, luxurious urban culture.

This culture can be found in the amenities that the cities offer, but it must also be derived from the form of developments themselves. While a location in an apparently

natural setting is important in this story of the good life, the developments stress that they offer the best possible technologies, advances, building materials, and conscious thinking about community form. The Lakes development, for instance, highlights that it "will feature its own 2-acre man-made lake, complete with waterfall, surrounded by lush green-space and play area" and of course will be "fully serviced with underground utilities and street lighting" (About The Lakes). At Highpointe, as we have seen, the integrity of the community is constructed in part through the careful delineation of "correct" architectural styles, down to details as small as exterior materials, deck forms, and the desire for courtyard fountains (Home Styles). The development offers "complete underground city services," a modern technology in urban construction that paradoxically allows "nearly half of the property to flourish in its natural state" (Introduction). The dream home that is promised becomes possible through the prior work of constructing "a comprehensive building scheme" (Introduction). Whisper Ridge, we are told, began with "a vision…to design…home sites where nature governed every element of planning" (Home); we are thus reminded that the natural, evolved community that is so highly valued depends upon the cultural effort to envision and materialize the ideal. At Wilden, where the community is constructed, through the lifestyles of its residents, as "always natural," we are assured that the necessary culture has operated in the conceptualization and construction of the community: "[t]he keenest minds in community design were employed to complete an exhaustive master plan for this Kelowna real estate development" (About Us). The houses are located in a park-like setting, but "planning for the development considers the most modern techniques in home heating and cooling" (Geothermal). In a refiguring of Plato's desire to instantiate the

metaphysical form, Wilden's developer writes that "seeing my vision of Wilden materialize step by step fills me with a sense of pride and satisfaction" (Vision). Thus culture both supports the process of development, through the highly precise vision and planning stages, and is materialized in the development, through the practices that build the community and in the form of the houses themselves.

It is clearly necessary, therefore, to include both nature and culture within the spaces, forms, and practices of the ideal community. Too much nature, in setting, distance, or housing form, will undermine the good life, as residents will be too focussed on practical necessities. Too much culture will also be damaging, as residents will become separated from what is presented as the foundation of community form. What is needed, these advertisements proclaim, is harmony, balance, a resolution to the tension between nature and culture that Plato and Aristotle first articulate. The claim to offer this resolution is explicit and consistent: "Whisper Ridge promotes a lifestyle in harmony with its natural surroundings" (The Lifestyle); "Wilden is the promise of serenity. It's a hillside community that marries the landscape with soft compliments of architectural beauty" (Home); "The Lakes is the ideal balance of nature, community, and serenity…[whose] master plan brings you the benefit of a distinctive neighbourhood in harmony with the surroundings" (About The Lakes; Master Plan).

The specific basis of this balance or resolution becomes more clear through the repeated references to the joint accessibility of nature and culture, to the ability to have both within a limited time and space. Wilden thus locates itself against the urban and rural geography of the Okanagan Valley: "[j]ust minutes from Kelowna's downtown and lakeside, Wilden extends from the city centre 4 km to the north through orchards and

woodlands with towering pine forests, secluded lakes and a multitude of hillside walking trails. A discreetly private place to live, Wilden is still just minutes from shopping, schools, and all of the Okanagan's splendid recreational offerings" (Location). At another point on its site, potential buyers are invited to "[e]xplore dozens of Wilden's parks and ponds on this prized piece of property. Discover all kinds of wildlife, birds and plants and some of the most prized views in the entire Okanagan. And the best part…all this is literally in your back yard! And only minutes from town, shopping, schools, UBCO [University of British Columbia – Okanagan], boating, [or] golfing" (Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces). Whisper Ridge, similarly, maintains a parallel focus on the natural setting, views, and nearby parks on the one hand, and cultural amenities, city services, and high-tech recreation on the other (The Lifestyle; The City). The Lakes development follows the same pattern, claiming that the master-planned community is "meticulously designed to blend the beauty of nature with the ultimate lifestyle" (Master Plan). The site highlights that these "picturesque properties are framed by acres of forested mountain range, yet are only a short distance to shopping and full urban amenities" (About The Lakes). Later, it describes how, "[c]lose to undisturbed woodlands as well as dynamic urban centres, The Lakes offers the best of both worlds. With easy accessibility to natural hiking and biking trails and other natural recreation pursuits, it's also within reach of the excitement and amenities of Kelowna and Vernon" (About The Lakes). Highpointe summarizes this perspective on the attempts to attain the good life by resolving a tension between nature and culture, as we have seen, by claiming that it is "[a] place where natural space blends in perfectly with all the comforts of the modern world" (Home).

The characterizations of nature and culture are achieved in part through a consistent evocation of differing time scales, where timelessness is opposed to progress, and unchanging community opposed to speed and movement. The community of Wilden "truly is an enduring masterpiece" whose "[t]imelessness [is] etched by earth and sky" (Vision; About Us). This timeless masterpiece, currently being built, is fortunately located only minutes away from shopping, restaurants, and the Kelowna airport. Highpointe makes the similar claim that it "is a place of uncommon beauty, a quiet alchemy years in the making, a graceful coming of age" (Inventory). Yet Highpointe stresses that it is only "minutes away from the excitement of Kelowna's legendary, year-round lifestyle" (Inventory), combining the claims to the slow, quiet time of the natural surroundings and the quick movement that maintains access to the urban culture. At The Lakes, we are presented with the juxtaposition of "undisturbed" woodlands and "dynamic" urban centres with "flourishing" economies (About The Lakes; Living in Lake Country). The development "offers a peaceful, top-of-the-world retreat" set amidst the small communities in the district of Lake Country that are "rich in pioneering history," a characterization that maintains the association of natural, rural, and timeless against cultural, urban, and progressive (Living in Lake Country). Whisper Ridge most clearly evokes the complicated relationships between these concepts: "Your journey to Whisper Ridge begins as a gentle winding road draws you up the mountainside to your exclusive acreage home site high above the troubles of the world" (The Lifestyle). Here, the worldly, troubling affairs of the city are contrasted with the peacefulness of the natural hillside, where a new lifestyle has "evolved" (Home), as if according to an Aristotelian *telos*. However, this idealized community cannot be fully

materialized, fully achieved, without continual participation in the "thriving urban centre" of Vernon, just minutes past the "golden corn fields and rustic farm houses" (The Lifestyle; The City).

According to the initial stories of ideal community as the *polis*, the threats posed by nature and culture required the need to structure a resolution between them to achieve the good life, and this achievement could be measured by the stability of the community. Not surprisingly, then, the advertisements for Okanagan sprawl as ideal community emphasize that these developments are "pre-planned" or "master-planned." These are not haphazard collections of houses and other buildings, nor are they spontaneous gatherings of people that are subject to significant changes of space, form, or practice. Rather, each of these developments is carefully structured, organized, and built, with the intent to produce a secure and stable community that remains essentially the same over time. Residents are safe from worrisome interference, uncontrollable elements, and deviation of any sort. Thus Highpointe claims the safety of being "[a] remarkable sun-blessed enclave…[with] exclusive hilltop privacy" (Inventory) and promises that "[nothing] disturbs your panoramic view of the city and valley" (The View). Whisper Ridge emphasizes the long-term security provided to residents through the privately held park, where the "lands will remain as protected forest, natural mountain terrain, trails and greenbelt" (Home). Wilden combines the images of timelessness in nature and security of culture, promising that "[t]he sensitively planned community rising from the highlands will hallmark tomorrow's lifestyle. Wilden is a promise of environmentally consciousness and serenity" (Okanagan Lifestyle). It offers residents a "recreational

legacy" where the lifestyle "can be either active or sedate – but always natural" (Okanagan Lifestyle).

If attaining the good life of the community requires resolving the conceptual tension between nature and culture, which sees them as both the necessary conditions of the good life and the fundamental threats to this ideal community, then the resolution that the sprawl proposes is delineated in spatial and temporal terms. Spatially, nature becomes the rural or uninhabited landscape, culture becomes the cityscape, and the ideal community attempts to locate itself in the liminal zone between, where residents are promised a stable balance between nature and culture in the form of empty, pristine, undeveloped land and created, developed, and capitalized urban ventures. What is lost in this spatio-temporal representation of ideal community, idealized in the discourse of sprawl, is the paradox that the development of these forms of community, spreading into the previously non-urban landscape, extends the boundaries of the suburban. The advertisements visually repeat the discursive construction of natural space, cycling an array of images of open hillsides, undisturbed wildlands, expansive orchards, pristine lakes, and forested slopes; they do not show images of the ubiquitous curved pavement, street lights, double garages, and expansive blank windows that more and more mark the hillsides of the Okanagan Valley.

This extension occurs in space as the imposition of the urban built form (paved roads, street lights and city services), and in time as the imposition of the rapid change associated with the urban. Temporally, as we have seen, nature becomes timeless, traditional, slow, and consistent, definitionally attached to concepts of the rural, while culture becomes changing, dynamic, fast-paced, and progressive, the time and speed of

the urban. Nature and culture become constructed in time and space as rural and urban, traditional and modern, timeless and progressive. Highpointe claims that it is "[a] place where natural space blends with the comforts of the modern world," yet the spatial movement of sprawling developments continually pulls these "natural spaces" into the built environment of the urban, generating the search for further natural spaces that can become the new site of the ideal community. Similarly, the temporal movement of successive impositions of solutions over problems pushes sprawl as the latest construction of the *polis* to be built over the landscape, only to drive the need for another imposed solution as sprawl fails to deliver the promised security. If understood in dynamic rather than synchronic terms, the balance between nature and culture that is everywhere evoked as a successful harmony in these advertisements is no more than temporary at best, an insecure attempt to achieve the ideal that inevitably pushes the ideal further out of reach. This paradox should not be surprising, as we have seen that since the initial story of political community as the *polis*, insecurity has been embedded within the terms that are meant to provide security to human community.

15: THE GOOD LIFE AS BUILT BY SPRAWL

There is a troubling consistency that is contained in the overall repetition of problems and solutions out of the tensions that characterize the *polis* discourse. While very different solutions to the problem of politics are articulated by different theorists, at different times, in different contexts, the characterization of the problems and the relationship of the solutions to the problems remain tied to the perceived tensions, such as between nature and culture, that have been noted. Within this cycle of repetition, within this cycle of imposing supposedly stable and secure solutions over the supposedly threatening insecurity posed by phenomenal nature, bodies, and the wrong forms of human culture, sprawl can be read as one more attempted solution, one more imposition of a claim to the right form of resolution to this ongoing problem. This reading is encouraged and supported by the discourse of sprawl itself, which locates itself within the structural patterns of the discourse of the *polis*. If the *polis*, as claims to ideal human community and the good life, has always been articulated as claims regarding the necessary spaces, forms, and practices of politics, then even the apolitical discourse of suburban development can be understood as making a claim towards offering the best form of human organization, the most stable resolution between nature and culture, and the most secure forms of materialization of the body and the city. In other words, sprawl offers a desirable and necessary political association.

To understand this claim that sprawl is a peculiarly apolitical reworking of the dream of political community, we must distinguish between the points of intersection between sprawl and established political venues, and the politics embedded within the

communities that sprawl constructs. Certainly, the practices of development in the pattern of sprawling suburbs have become increasingly contentious and subject to debate, and aspects of this debate have become located within avenues that are considered more formally political: city councils, grassroots organizations, and provincial or federal levels of government, to name a few. Sprawl can therefore be considered a political problem insofar as its construction relies on the support of external forces and actors. Yet this approach to analyzing sprawl acknowledges the politics of the practice only when its supporters or detractors act within spaces, forms, and practices of already recognized political communities. In other words, it locates the politics of sprawl outside of the built and conceptual communities and outside of the discourse of sprawl. From this perspective, the community that sprawl constructs is just a community, a neighbourhood, a collection of residences, a form of cultural interaction, but not in and of itself a political entity or practice.

The reading of sprawl presented here suggests that it constructs a political community, and a claim to political authority, and thus should be analyzed as a political problem. The spaces, forms, and practices of community that are encouraged through sprawl should be analyzed as attempts to build and secure the good life and thus questioned regarding who gets to participate, how, and when. And the discourse of community that is constructed and mobilized through sprawl should be analyzed as an attempt to claim truth or knowledge of the good life and thus questioned regarding who makes these claims, who benefits from them, and what alternative perspectives are closed down through this discourse. This concept of politics as the effort to envision, construct, and secure the good life of the community over time is the central feature of the Greek

concept of the *polis*, as has been discussed; yet although the discourse of sprawl clearly invokes all the key features of the discourse of the *polis*, it is a version of the *polis* that has already undergone enormous conceptual and material changes in the transposition from ancient Greece to the modern West, and from classical modernity to our contemporary times. Most critically, the shift in the scale of the *polis* from the ancient city to the modern state – which has remained the dominant, if increasingly unstable, form of political community – served to restrict the recognition of political practice and political authority to the sovereign, territorially bounded, and conceptually abstract state. The depoliticization of the claims to authority that the discourse of sprawl poses both exists within, and is made possible by, the effects of this modern resolution of the tensions between nature and culture. While the communities constructed by sprawl, and the claims to authority made by the discourse of sprawl, enjoy a seemingly apolitical freedom, the discourse of sprawl claims to be able to reconstruct the *polis* by offering a contemporary resolution to the problem of the irresolvable tension between nature and culture.

The advertisements for suburban developments in the Okanagan claim to reach, or offer access to, a noumenal or essential nature. The Rousseauian dream of a simple and authentic existence, achieved through communion with a nature untainted by human activity and more fundamentally the excesses of urban culture, is promoted throughout the text and images of these advertisements. Hence we see the abundance of images of open hillsides, glistening lakes, deer and wildflowers, forests, and other visual markers for pristine, undisturbed nature, as well as the verbal repetition of the same words and phrases. However, what the advertisements actually emphasize is a phenomenal

encounter with features that are considered to fit within the concept of nature. Here, nature is an experience, an observation, or an appearance that can be as satisfied by the vista of vineyards and orchards as by an uncultivated hillside, as happy with a master-planned trail system around a constructed lake and waterfall as with an unmarked and undirected ramble over undeveloped grasslands. There is little account of the impact or effect on anything that might be considered a "nature" outside of the experience or mental activity of the subject, echoing the Kantian shift to the phenomenal as the only knowable realm. Yet the very capacity to maintain some easy distinction between a "natural" landscape and one that has been cultivated, developed, or otherwise brought within a "cultural" condition is undermined by these advertisements, as the construction within them of "natural" to include both the open hillside and the vineyard, both Okanagan Lake and the planned and built neighbourhood lake, highlights the extent to which the definition and content of the term has always been a matter of discursive production. What is maintained here is the definition of natural as both the opposition to, and the basis of, the cultural, even as any natural or inherent content of this definition is brought into question.

In line with the discourse of the *polis*, these advertisements claim to offer a form of human culture or community that is in accordance with their claim to nature. This accord, this balance, is to be effected in spatial and temporal terms, as we have seen, insofar as the suburban location is designated as the appropriate resolution between nature and culture in the form of the rural and the urban, tradition and progress. Because of this spatial and temporal resolution, and the offer of access to nature as a key aspect of community living, the developments studied here project the claim that this form of

community is more natural, and that it has the best possibility of contributing to stable and authentic interactions among residents. This resolution is therefore also to be effected through practice, through the willingness and capacity of residents to participate in the experiences of nature and culture that are at their doorsteps, or a short drive away. However, these advertisements cannot be read without becoming aware of the degree of effort, control, and construction that is involved in building this natural good life. Any suggestion that these communities are more "natural" than any other sort of human community – where natural here encompasses the idea of necessary, essential, or organic, in the Aristotelian teleological sense – is belied by the substantial planning and positioning involved, as evidenced by the way that the advertisements describe their own building process. Nor can this be envisioned as the work necessary to construct the physical substance of the community to suit the ideal, Platonic metaphysical form, as we have seen that the discursive practices involved in defining and constructing community, along with nature and culture, work with variable and contingent content. Just as the advertisements work to produce an image of natural human community, the master-planning and extensive site (re)construction works to reproduce this image by carefully crafting the built residential community according to the latest ideal of the good life.

Thus, this construction of the good life does not only happen through the material residence, neighbourhood, or community, but also, and crucially, through the discursive practices that promote particular concepts of community and the good life in relation to a claimed resolution between nature and culture that can bring long-term stability to the community. Throughout the discourse of the *polis*, this resolution figures as the precursor to, the practice of, and the uneasy threat to politics, defined as the good life that can

achieve and maintain this resolution. As we have seen, a major aspect of this concern with instability was the perceived difference between the ideal or metaphysical form and the embodied, phenomenal, particular instance. This conflict is at the centre of the construction of politics as the community whose security is based on the ability to define and maintain a relationship between nature and culture. It has been instrumental in the definition of politics as the affairs of the world, destined always to succumb to threats, precisely because the changing phenomena of the world can never match the original metaphysical stability, or the later disembodied rationality that in the modern age takes the place of noumena as the ideal of metaphysical truth. The insecurity of the original vision of the *polis* both gave rise to the modern dream of the stable, territorially bounded and sovereign nation state that could secure political community for citizens as subjects, and gave way to the reproduction of the dynamic of instability between nature and culture in this new space, form, and practice of politics. The problem of insecurity and the solution of the *polis* as ancient city becomes refigured as the problem of insecurity and the solution of the *polis* as modern state. Yet as contemporary discussion, analysis, and intervention against "failed states" makes all too clear, this resolution embodied its own instabilities. From the preceding interpretation of Plato and Aristotle, we can see that the construction of the terms of the problem has necessitated the impossibility of a stable resolution as the *polis*.

A consistent thread of analysis in relation to the assumed certainty, universality, and disembodied rationality of the modern age – analyses represented by figures such as Nietzsche and Heidegger, or more recently by writers such as Koyré, Arendt, and Harries – has been to decry the loss of meaning that accompanied the age and accompanies the

current experience of the instability of the institutions that marked modern politics. As noted previously, the responses to this loss of meaning and experience of instability have been the desire, on the one hand, to re-impose the institutions of modernity over the crumbling foundation, and on the other hand, to revel in the particularity, embodiment, and contingency that the recognition of discursive constructions enables.

Within this context, sprawl can be understood as a particular attempt to once again re-impose the discourse of the *polis*, in a different space, form, and practice than the state required, in an attempt to find stability and meaning once more. It emphasizes connection with "nature" through the right lot and house purchase or construction, and connection with "culture" through the right form of community, the right (like-minded) neighbours, and the right access to urban cultural amenities. The space of the (immediate) community is small, reduced again to the lived, day-to-day experiences rather than the abstracted scale of the state; however, the spaces required to construct this community are not merely the immediate space or geography, but also the extended, overlapping, and sometimes even contradictory spaces of local, regional, state, and transnational political structures, of global financial networks, of natural resource extraction, and of varyingly felt effects of this particular built community form. The form is contained and tightly controlled, with the neighbourhood in general being constructed according to detailed plans and individual houses being constructed within a narrow range of approved architectural forms, landscaping, and so on. The relevant institutions in this political community become forms of community organizations – in particular strata councils – and the highly informal and formalized relationships between developer and city council,

developer and purchaser, resident and resident, and residents and other nearby communities both rural and urban. These forms depend on structures of inclusion and exclusion for definition and function, and thus also cannot be interpreted as solely an issue for the immediate community. The practices emphasized are highly physical and experiential. They are coded in the language of "lifestyle" as the particular practice of culture that can achieve the necessary balance with nature, such as the Wilden advertisement that "offers a lifestyle to residents that can be either active or sedate – but always natural" (Okanagan Lifestyle). The dominant emphasis on bodily leisure activities and sensual experience is at odds with the distinction prevalent from Aristotle to Arendt that holds public, leisure activities to be separate and more significant than private, embodied activities to secure ongoing physical existence. As these practices are not spatially isolated, they also represent an imposition of the political community beyond the delineated space of the built neighbourhood – an illustrative example being the endless demand for more golf courses (and more staff to service them). Thus, it is critical to analyze the political community of sprawl not as a contained phenomenon, but one that helps to construct, enable, or limit – both discursively and materially, to employ that problematic distinction – a range of other possible ways of living with one another in the world.

It is also possible to read in sprawl, and in particular in the emphasis on the natural forms of the house and the community and the bodily leisure that is essential to this lifestyle, a reaction to the disembodiment of the rational modern age and its dominant discourse of a split between mind and body.[27] In the discourse of sprawl, embodiment is re-imagined as the materialization of, and of the individual in, the built community.

Where the body was once lost, ignored, or rejected as the cause of so much heart-breaking instability, it is found and celebrated again in the suburban house. This relationship between individual body and the embodiment of life in the ideal house can help to explain the contemporary fascination with diets and developments, the dual emphasis on makeover shows for both the body (such as *The Swan*, *Extreme Makeover*, *The Biggest Losers*, and many others) and the home (such as *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, *Debbie Travis's Facelift*, or *Real Renos*, which are primarily suburban in their focus). In response to what appears as the age-old concern with the mortality of the body, and the insecurity that personal death brings to the possibility of a stable, ongoing, unchanging community, sprawl promises that security and longevity can be found in the residential community. The right relationship to the body and the city, as described by Aristotle and Plato, and significantly refigured over time by theorists as different as Rousseau and Arendt, becomes transposed into a right relationship with the house. This relationship promises to be a unique resolution of the tensions between individual and community, the body and the city, and most importantly, between nature and culture. If we recall the proverbial saying that the body is the house of the soul, then in sprawl we can see the house become the body for the soul. Here, the ideal house represents an attempt to materialize the soul and immortalize the body. Thus, sprawl not only claims to offer a concrete new space, form, and practice for politics; it also reworks the tension between the body and the city, and between these material aspects of human existence and the dream of metaphysical truth and stability, both of which have been central to thinking about politics. One of the most obvious political consequences of this extension from body to house is that those who do not own houses – both renters, and more

significantly, homeless people – are faced with a form of disembodiment, a lack of corpo-reality in the contemporary community, and hence an experience of a lack of political standing.

The right relationship between the individual and the house – built in the right spatial location, of the right materials, and by implication, by the right type of people – becomes extended to the "master-planned" community – where the right people embody the right practices in the right forms of institutions and relationships. This claim to embody a master plan has a powerful resonance with Sennett's analysis of the city as continually attempting to materialize a master image of the body. In an interesting revision, the master image of the body implied by the discourse of sprawl is of a non-urban urban dweller and an apolitical political participant. It is a body marked by leisure and self-care, a fringe participant who structures the form of the city through a "natural lifestyle" that continually forces the expansion of the city's built environment to satisfy the desire for house situated in perfect balance between natural activity and cultured amenity. It is a body, a person, a lifestyle, that many people might desire, but that many cannot identify with or can never participate in. Whether we think of those people who crave the diversity, fast pace, and lack of predictability that are the analytical markers of the urban centre, or those who continue to try to find a space for the defined rural or agricultural lifestyle, the suburban community does not appeal to many who would envision ideal community, ideal lifestyle, or ideal embodied experiences in different terms. Yet there are enough people who do desire this ideal of community that demand for inclusion into this political space, form, and practice outstrips opportunities for participation. The literal price of inclusion rises beyond what many people have the

capacity to afford. The advertising copy of one Highpointe promotion, placed in *The Globe and Mail*, encompasses this tension between desire and inaccessibility:

> Go to great expanse. Homesites available = 70. Average lot size = 2/3 acre. Hours of annual sunshine in the Okanagan = 2000+. Championship golf courses nearby = 12. Panoramic views + sun-blessed lakes + exclusive hilltop privacy = Highpointe. You do the math. Nature is calling you home. (*The Globe and Mail*, A10-A11, Saturday July 16, 2005.)

The invitation to come home, to inhabit the neighbourhoods that are unobtainable for so many who call the Okanagan region their home; the invitation to locate oneself in the perfect spatial-temporal balance between nature and culture, which paradoxically encourages the spread of the urban into the non-urban and results in the endless reconstruction of what counts as natural space and cultural practice; the invitation to join the political community that is not named or explicitly enacted as such … the embedded content of these invitations demonstrates the tensions inherent in the discourse of sprawl as the ideal community.

From Sennett's analysis of the instability of the master image when faced with the nonconforming particularity of any embodied instance, we should not be surprised that sprawling suburban developments are being criticized and countered from all sides. The master image has always been known to break apart, just as a master-planned community that requires a location on the edge of the urban cannot be materialized and fixed in perpetuity against the dynamic movement of people, goods, businesses, and residences that is emphasized by analyses of the urban. Thus we see that suburban sprawl, as a claimed solution to the problems of contemporary cities, and an implied solution to the problems of political community in the nation-state, contains within it a conglomerate of problems that are now surfacing. A critical element of this repeated

cycle of problems and solutions is the way that sprawl, in its claim to solutions, works within the framework of the problem as a tension between nature and culture that needs to be resolved in order to achieve stability and security. By remaining within this framework, and by focussing on pre-planned stability as the marker of successful instantiation of community, the discourse of sprawl ensures that it will fail as a solution.

16: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

If suburban sprawling developments are becoming recognized as a problem in the Okanagan Valley, as letters to the editors of local papers, the focus on Official Community Plans by local governments, and growing attention of researchers and organizations suggests, then what are some of the alternatives that are presently being explored? What solutions are being constructed? How are developments responding to the critiques of sprawl? And how are these developments being marketed and sold to a public that is still inundated with advertisements for status quo development as sprawl?[28]

One suggested alternative is The Rise,[29] a residential resort community being developed on the east side of Vernon, over-looking Okanagan Lake. The company that is developing The Rise, Okanagan Hills Development Corporation, is clearly cognizant of the growing opposition to sprawling developments on the grounds of negative environmental impact. The Rise is part holiday resort and part residential neighbourhood, as are many housing development-plus-golf course-plus-resort constructions. It "promises an idyllic home for those seeking a weekend retreat, or a lifetime's haven" (Home). While this may seem an odd mix of transient visitors and long-term residents, The Rise unsurprisingly emphasizes that it is not just a resort, but a community, through consistent references such as "the resort community" and "the village" centre. The Rise website takes great effort to clarify that this "master-planned" community will do no damage to the environment in which it will be located: "We began with a thorough environmental study, identifying areas for preservation, enhancement and revegetation to achieve a net gain of sensitive habitat. Reclaimed grey water will be used for irrigation,

and local plant species will be extensively used for landscaping" (Master Plan). The development is guided by a seven-point sustainability strategy, which focuses on elements such as improving energy efficiency, minimizing impacts on existing ecosystems, reducing material use, and incorporating renewable energy. With the houses all built to incorporate geothermal technology, with one-third of the 297 hectare site "conserved in its natural state," and with the golf course watered through recovered waste water, The Rise seems to be in the position to claim that "[r]espect for the environment and respect for the land are foundations upon which The Rise is built" (Environment).

The Rise thus constructs a somewhat different concept of nature within its discourse of community: where other developments analyzed thus far have emphasized nature as appearance or backdrop, The Rise emphasizes nature as vulnerable and needing management or intervention. In this construction, phenomenal nature threatens human culture not through its uncontrollable excesses, but through an instability located in its fragility. The appropriate human culture to construct the ideal community must therefore be focussed on care and protection, even as it concentrates its energy on inserting itself into, and developing, this nature. We can see that while the precise definitions or conceptions of nature and culture have changed somewhat in this context, the relationship required between them to achieve ideal community remains consistent. This consistency is particularly evident in the way that the majority of the visual and verbal content of the website for The Rise repeats the elements of the discourse ideal community and of the *polis*:

> Imagine standing on your terrace set in the rugged highlands of the Okanagan Valley. You are high above the gentle blue calm of Lake Okanagan below. The sun is rising over the majestic Monashee

> Mountains to the east and a warm wind is rustling through the firs of the surrounding forest.
>
> The Okanagan's newest and most prestigious master planned community has been created to make you feel like you're a world away, but nothing could be further from the truth. All the conveniences of urban living can be found minutes from your front door in the city of Vernon and the Kelowna International Airport is only 30 minutes away with daily flights to Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Seattle and Toronto. The Rise is a unique community combining modern accessibility with the luxury of private resort living. (Location).

From the juxtaposition of calm, quiet, timeless nature and busy, modern, urban living; from the emotional evocation of the simple life of nature to the claim that The Rise exemplifies the best of the modern; from the offer of the security of the master-planned community to the promise of exclusivity, The Rise clearly constructs ideal community according to the same features and relationships that mark the other advertisements, even as it attempts to reconfigure the specific concepts of nature and culture within this relationship.

Of course, this text is accompanied by an image that is characteristically Okanagan: evening summer sun shines in from the west, making grasses and sage bushes in the foreground glow bright and gold. Okanagan Lake is a calm blue slice between the soft rises of the hills. In the distance, higher mountains rise in a blue haze. In the shadows of the hills we can distinguish a line of homes along each of the two roads that flank the lakeshore, while brighter green patches make clear where irrigation is in place. Other than this low line of fairly sparse housing, the hills shown are bare of visible constructions. This space, constructed as vulnerable, endangered, and precious by the text that advertises The Rise, is the space that will be protected by being reconstructed as a golf course, a vineyard, a village centre with swimming pools and a five-storey quadrant

of apartments, and concentric rings of houses, all styled with self-described "Mediterranean" and "Tuscan" architecture (Real Estate). The Rise attempts to evoke the naturalness of this community by equating it with the long, slow movement of time that is made a characteristic of nature rather than culture, the country-side rather than the urban: "[a] great Okanagan resort community is more than roads, homes, and amenities. It must evolve over time, creating a sense of place where the human spirit can thrive" (Master Plan). Yet the constructedness of this claim to natural, ideal community is also apparent, such as in the claim that "The Rise's resort community plan has been built literally from the ground up, interweaving thoughtful development with natural trails, parks and conservation areas" (Master Plan). The authority to envision and construct community in a particular form is essential to the promise of security. And, if security is the promise that the good life can continue undisturbed into the future, then The Rise's advertising tagline, the invitation to "Gaze into the future. Discover how far you can see" (Home), clearly represents an offer to provide this security to residents. As an alternative to sprawl, The Rise might offer a reduced environmental impact, but it remains troublesome in its unilateral claim to the authority to redefine the problem within the existing structures of a problematic discourse, and in its imposition of a redefined problem as the solution.

Another suggested alternative is the explicitly New Urbanist/Neo-Traditional Neighbourhood (NTN) community that calls itself The Village of Kettle Valley. Neo-traditional community design has been promoted as one of the two main alternatives to suburban sprawl (the other being Smart Growth principles). In particular, neo-traditional community attempts to change the undifferentiated, single use residential zones that are

one of the main characteristics suburban sprawl. Located fifteen kilometres south of downtown Kelowna, The Village of Kettle Valley "weaves through 270 acres [109 ha] of mountain meadow and forests" (Our Village). It was awarded 2004 Best Community Development in Canada by the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) SAM awards.[30] The developers of Kettle Valley claim to have "created a community that offers an exceptional quality of life for our residents" by building according to the traditional, "historical town plan on which the community is built" (Home). These features include the construction of a central village square, the provision of nearby parks and wide, pedestrian friendly sidewalks, and "because a community is made up of a variety of people at different stages of their lives, … a rare spectrum of real estate opportunities for sale from single detached building lots to townhomes, custom residences and estates" (Home). However, even from these few quotes, it becomes clear that while some specifics of the form of built community are different from the standard model of suburban sprawl, the emphasis on the construction of community has remained very much the same. The Kettle Valley website claims that "[t]here is a quiet understanding among those who choose to live here. A shared responsibility to support and contribute to the health of the community" (Our Village). Along with its centre in the village square, this neighbourhood communicates through a community newsletter. Indeed "[a]ll elements, every detail of this carefully planned development are designed to contribute to community" (Our Village).

This emphasis on community, so similar to the discourse of sprawl, is matched by a similar need to find serenity, harmony, balance, and thus security, through the resolution of nature and culture. The tensions between nature and culture, rural and

urban, slow and fast, traditional and modern, are all repeated here. The development claims that it "fosters family life for all ages by perfectly balancing traditional values with modern conveniences. Wide tree-lined sidewalks, front porches and abundant local parks provide escape from the demands of modern life" (Home). Further, "[i]n this oasis surrounded by nature, residents of this active little town can truly enjoy a serene lifestyle with the comfort of modern-day conveniences close at hand" (Our Village). The claim that this resolution of nature and culture in the (neo-traditional) ideal neighbourhood will bring security to the (political) community is made explicitly: "In the Village of Kettle Valley, where children walk to playgrounds and parks within the safety of their own neighbourhood, families share a rare sense of belonging and security" (Our Village).

Kettle Valley thus clearly replays the discourse of sprawl to authorize a revised vision of the ideal edge community, the same spatial-temporal resolution in a slightly different built form. It represents itself as the antithesis of suburban sprawl, which is now implicitly reconstructed as a serious threat to community – second only to the more worrisome threats of uncontrollable urban culture. However, not only does it repeat the discursive constructions that constitute much of the appeal of sprawl; it also repeats much of the same built form that characterizes sprawl, in particular, the spatial location of the ideal resolution. Although Kettle Valley has been zoned as one of the recognized "nodal communities" that the Official Community Plan of Kelowna has designated in an attempt to curb sprawl, the village is located about five kilometers away from the closest bus route into downtown Kelowna, ensuring that the community remains vehicle dependent, adding stress to the narrow lakeside road that leads to this growing community, and

making children, elderly, and disabled residents dependent on others to get around. Further, as was seen in the Okanagan Mountain Park fire in the summer of 2003, building residential communities into isolated dry grasslands and Ponderosa pine forests can lead to disasters in the increasingly hot, fire-threatened summers of the interior of British Columbia, a painful irony in the dreamed-for metaphysical stability of the ideal home in the ideal community.

While each of these solutions to sprawl addresses some of the most immediate concerns that suburban sprawl has raised – such as loss of greenspace, excessive resource use, and threats to local flora and fauna in the case of The Rise, or loss of social interaction, public space, and walkability in the case of The Village of Kettle Valley – we can also see that they are not that different from the problematic foundations on which the discourse of sprawl is constructed. In looking more closely at the spaces, forms, and practices of political community that are built within the construction of sprawling communities, we could identify an emphasis on exclusivity through cost, control through master-planning, harmony through resolving the tensions in the constructs of nature and culture, and authority through the claim to offer security. The production of desire replaces the opportunity for debate, and the terms of the problem – nature and culture, rural and urban, security and insecurity, embodiment and rationality – are accepted and reproduced in the solution. In looking at the proposed solutions of The Rise and Kettle Valley, we can ask whether it is enough to say that nature is pre-planned trails between houses or designated conservation zones, and whether 'protecting' this nature is sufficiently achieved through greywater recovery to irrigate another golf course, and geothermal technology to heat and cool another development of houses built into this

hillside. If we ask whose nature this gets to be and who gets left out, we see that the construction of nature in terms of what is designated and protected ensures that "nature" becomes the purview of the developers and purchasers. It is subsequent; it is what remains; it now owes its definition and existence to the practice of constructing this ideal community. Similarly, is it enough to say that community is a pre-planned, isolated, safety-conscious collection of like-minded people and families, happily driving themselves from their secure home in their ideal community on their excursions to work in the city or their days out on the golf course? If this is a solution to the problem of sprawl, what is gained? Who is excluded?

More importantly, where do the conceptual problems that trouble sprawl go? The consistency in the formulation of the problem of human community – present in the discourse of the *polis*, present in the nascent discourse of the state, and present in the discourse of sprawl – suggests serious issues that trouble the way we think about ourselves as humans, in relation to ourselves and others, in relation to our constructions of nature and culture, and in the ways we distinguish between human and non-human nature. Each of the uses of ideal community, from the *polis* to the state to sprawl and now in the suggested solutions to sprawl, circumvent the problem by posing a unilateral resolution as a solution and by unilaterally claiming the authority to have, construct, and secure the solution. The concepts or descriptions of community, nature, culture, and thus implicitly of politics, take different forms as proponents attempt to repose the terms, alter the resolution, and achieved the desired stability. These shifts include changes in the concept of the relation between politics and some concept or claim of the physical and metaphysical world, as we have seen continued in the discourse of sprawl. However, by

avoiding the question of this desire to have politics both depend on and ensure stability, security, and lack of change over time, they do not confront a critical aspect of the tensions that trouble attempts to construct political community.

17: PERSISTENT SIMILARITIES

Although it is impossible to draw a straight line of analysis from the *polis* to contemporary suburban sprawl and the attempts to construct solutions to sprawl, from the reading presented here of Plato and Aristotle, Rousseau and Kant, and Okanagan real estate developments, we can identify some key elements of the discourse of the *polis* that remain highly relevant to the analysis of sprawl as a political problem. More importantly, these same elements appear to have remained relevant to the analysis of the claimed solutions to sprawl. While it is not possible here to apply the same line of analysis more broadly, it is easy to see that this discourse of a set of relationships that can secure political community is also constructed in particular ways in theorizations of the modern state and in claims to the solutions to sprawl, suggesting that the original framing of the problem of community as one of nature, culture, and security has continued to shape the way we think about politics in the West.

To over-emphasize these similarities is to risk erasing the very particular techniques of discursive production, particular content, and particular effects of the discourse of ideal community as it shifts in time and place, and in space, forms, and practices. These particularities are crucial for understanding how some claims to community and authority become dominant over others in various contexts and how these dominant constructions shape concepts of the problems of politics and the necessary solutions. However, to focus on the particularities to the exclusion of the consideration of these persistent similarities is to miss, perhaps, a crucial feature of our practices of envisioning and constructing political communities. From the initial articulations of ideal

political community as the *polis* of ancient Greece, to the reconfiguration of concepts of political community in terms of the nation-state and modernity, to the recent configuration in terms of the apolitical residential, suburban community, definitions and constructions of politics according to community and authority have occurred within similar structures or frameworks. Contemporary political thinking has, in part, developed a skepticism about the goals and claims of classical modernity, just as political thinking in the modern age constructed itself out of a skepticism about the goals and claims of the classical ancient world, yet the framing of politics in terms of ideal community and the good life remains consistent within articulations of the cosmopolis, the bioregion, the livable or sustainable city, and in the apolitical vision of the suburban community. These contemporary reconstructions of political community promise to achieve the long-desired metaphysical stability through new resolutions between new constructions of nature and culture. Similarly, the location or foundation of the desired metaphysical truth has also experienced revision: much of contemporary thinking about politics centres on analyzing power and authority in terms of the truth claims of language, discourse, and contingent constructions, rather than claims to truth embedded in spatial and temporal sovereignty or in metaphysical concepts of eternal, noumenal nature. Yet the analysis followed here suggests that in important ways, these revisions still function within the metaphysics of truth.

There are five important similarities to highlight.

First, visions of suburban community and their built forms are not spontaneous gatherings that have slowly evolved over time, as so many advertisements attempt to claim. Rather, in much the same way as Plato delineates a strict residential, educational

and social structure for his *kallipolis*, or Aristotle outlines the efforts and activities required to constitute the stable *polis*, the advertisements for sprawl demonstrate the extent to which these communities are constructions. They are designed, formulated, and built according to elaborately detailed blueprints. They are mapped out and organized, with attention to detail becoming attempts to control all details. These advertisements sell visions of this construct to potential residents, simultaneously denying the constructive process and claiming credit for the constructed result. This construction is participatory only insofar as residents initially accept the constructed vision; in doing so, they conceptually and materially support the construction of community according to the advertised vision. Along with the built construction come the attempts to constitute other elements of the community, the institutions and practices of interaction, through features such as the designated trails and public spaces. Interaction is also constructed more broadly, between the particular community and its surroundings, characterized in terms of adjacent rural and urban communities, nearby natural areas and cultural amenities. The concept of the healthy constitution of the individual and the community is constructed in this case as active but leisured, nature-loving but cultured. While some of these details change in some of the proposed alternatives to sprawl – as seen in the advertisements for The Rise and The Village of Kettle Valley – the tension between the desire to claim a natural, organic, spontaneous community and the desire to claim the authority and capacity to construct the community is repeated once again. In all instances, the construction that can be claimed to be right and solid becomes the construction that can hope to be secured over time.

This continuing emphasis on security or stability raises a second point of similarity, where the instability of a perceived problem or difficulty of human being requires the imposition or materialization of a metaphysical truth to provide stability. This problem of human being seems to arise from the difficulty of understanding humans as animal, biological, mortal bodies and beings with the capacity to think rationally and abstractly, in eternal or even infinite terms. The construction of this problem into opposed concepts of nature and culture has become so dominant that not only has it influenced the ability to think about human community, it has also influenced the very characterization of the problem here as one of body versus mind, particularity and mortality versus abstraction and eternity, dualisms opposed and in tension, inescapable yet incompatible. These dualisms become conceived within the modern era in the close (though not perfectly parallel) constructions of rural and urban, country and city, tradition and progress. The instability of human being and human community is not found in one of these terms over the other, but rather is due to their characterization as both the possibility for political community and the threats to politics thus defined.

In attempting to give long-term stability to this perceived instability, Plato and Aristotle look to an idealized, essentialized noumenal truth of nature that can be imposed through the right cultural spaces, forms, and practices on variable and vulnerable phenomenal nature. This conception of metaphysical truth changes over time. If there were the space to explore it, we could see it appear in the modern age as the truth of rational, disembodied universalism, the truth of the state form that is universally the same in time and space, matched with the truth of political subjectivity as the rational individual. Whereas Plato and Aristotle rely on an existent truth of nature that can be

known, Newton and Kant refigure this as unknowable; truth becomes the *a priori* principles that are strong enough to give structure and order – and thus the highly sought-after stability and security – to the worldly phenomena that include, and trouble, human community.

The advertisements that promote sprawling developments in the Okanagan reproduce the desire for metaphysical truth to provide a secure structure to the ideal community, at times playing within the Greek discourse of noumena, at times within the modern discourse of laws that order the phenomena, and at times sliding into a more explicit discourse of construction and contingency, which could be considered a discourse of discourse itself. In these cases – visible in the emphasis on the construction of the master-plan, for instance, or the intention to build a lifestyle – metaphysical truth, and thus security, is claimed through the over-whelming weight of normalization itself. Here, normalization functions as continuity, and continuity, whether in concepts or in built forms, is a sign of stability, security, and thus the right political structures, the right construction of the necessary relationship between nature and culture.

A third powerful similarity is the use, throughout time, of claims articulated through language and imagery, through visual and verbal constructions, regarding the features that should exemplify the ideal spaces, forms, and practices of political community. In other words, in following the changing story of politics as the *polis*, it becomes clear that this political community has always been constructed as much through discursive practices as through concrete endeavors to house, organize, and fundamentally order human interaction. Within this context, "discourse" becomes a way of describing the mechanisms or practices through which the terms of politics are debated; but it also

describes the mechanisms that enable the relationships at the heart of the *polis* to remain consistent. We could consider this a range of discourses of the details of political community, constructed and reconstructed within a meta-discourse of the *polis* that links ideal political community to nature, culture, and metaphysical stability in the ways we have seen.

This recognition of discourse as central to the continuity of the *polis*, as well as its several discontinuities, brings us to a fourth similarity over time, which is the ongoing practice of claiming authority through discursive productions, and participating in the discursive construction of nature and culture as apolitical in order to depoliticize these claims to authority. In the visions of ideal political community considered here, we can see that claims to the authority to define and construct this vision are made continually, in the repeated presentation of the vision as an established, natural, and normal fact. These claims are elided as political constructions by being expressed through claims regarding the characteristics of nature and culture and best possible relationship between them. There is a distinction here between the explicit consideration of the spaces, forms, and practices of community that are appropriate to designate as political, which is present in Plato and Aristotle but absent in the advertisements for sprawl and those for possible alternatives, and between the explicit consideration of the politics of how these spaces, forms, and practices are defined, promoted, and constructed, which is not present in any of these articulations of political community. This authority is grounded in and judged by the claim that the proposed resolution between nature and culture will bring metaphysical stability to the community.

Within this multi-directional, multi-dimensional tangle of practices and results of discursive constructions of political community, there is the final similarity of the way that forms of community and forms of authority have been bound together within this meta-discourse of nature and culture, forming a dominant (but not the only dominant) framework of politics in the West. This meta-discourse cannot be disconnected from its more concrete expression in terms of the city and the body, representative of the changing phenomenal existence of humans that makes politics necessary, the embodied existence that makes politics possible, and the instability that threatens politics. This link between discursive productions, authority, and metaphysics relies on the same meta-discourse of insecurity that gives claims to metaphysical truth their conceptual strength. Discursive authority could thus be said to rely on this fear of insecurity, even though we might also maintain that this fear has itself been discursively produced in particular forms at particular times.

18: PROBLEMS AS SOLUTIONS: THE DEFINITION OF POLITICS

We have identified a fundamental paradox contained within the phenomenon of sprawl, which is that by its own definition of ideal community located in the spatial and temporal mediation between nature and culture, rural and urban, it cannot remain stable and unchanged over time. Not only is sprawl unsustainable because it relies on development, construction, and living practices that cannot be maintained in the context of finite planetary resources; it is also unsustainable because, as we have seen, the definition of the ideal in these terms spurs the continual spread of a range of features, characterized as urban, that suburban sprawl seeks to escape. What is the ideal suburban community one year is just another big city neighbourhood the next – far from nature, absorbed into relentless urban culture, and unable to maintain control over the master-planned vision at its origin. Thus the dynamics inherent within the specific discourse of sprawl undermine the stated goal of the discourse of the *polis*, just as in previous ages the dynamics of the ancient city-state and the modern nation-state undermined their goals of ideal, stable political community.

But we need to recognize another, more fundamental problem with this discourse of the *polis* as the need and the ability to impose a stable solution onto the perceived problem of human existence and interaction, which is that it connects politics to the act of solving this problem, and by extension, all problems. The advertisements for sprawl in the Okanagan, and the advertisements for claimed alternatives to sprawl that were considered here, are discursive productions not only of the ideal solution but also of the perceived problem of organizing human community in the late modern age – productions

that inevitably narrow the possible range of solutions. This equation of politics with solutions forecloses the discussion of how the problem is framed and how the solutions are developed, justified, and constituted. To understand this practice as a political problem requires recognizing the way that, in the discourse of politics as the *polis* and in the meta-discourse of instability and metaphysical truth, politics has been discursively connected to the ability and the authority to solve problems and elided from considerations of the construction of the problem. In other words, it depoliticizes the process of naming the problem and skirts the questions of problem for whom, and why.

The complexity of the contemporary systemic conditions within which suburban sprawl is promoted and constructed makes it uninviting or overwhelmingly difficult to tackle anything other than what might be seen as the most immediate conditions of sprawl. These immediate conditions, raised at the outset of this analysis, include zoning practices, sales tactics, and conflicts between levels of government. More diffuse or abstract systems such as resource extraction, investment patterns, and international trade, become less accessible, not to mention what could still be recognized as the ultimate structural conditions of the late modern age, namely, the state and capital. More importantly, however, the discursive practices that produce sprawl make tackling these structural conditions seem counter-productive to the successful realization of political community, idealized as a stable solution, precisely because these structural conditions were constructed within the discourse of being a solution to previous problems. Within this discourse and the dynamics of problems and solutions, the pattern has been to impose a solution without opening the wider debate of what the problem is and how the solution might work to reinforce or reproduce this problem. Each successive change is promoted

as a solution, a form of stability, so that the impetus is to support, protect, and sustain the construction for as long as possible.

This dynamic forces us to examine the relationship between this concept of politics and the production of this insecurity through defining the terms of its own condition according to the necessary but impossible resolution between nature and culture. By constructing this tension as the problem of human co-existence, and by defining politics as the need for security against this consistent threat, we are driven to envision and construct solutions to this perceived instability. However, by not looking at the construction of this problem as central to notions of human community and politics, we are diverted from asking about the desire for security. When we open this question, we see that the desire for security, and ultimately, the way that insecurity has been embedded within the definition of politics, makes necessary the search for solution after solution – impossible solutions, as the inherent insecurity makes clear.

Rather than remain in the pattern of decrying the lack of stability in suburban sprawl, and searching to present a "solution" that will be more stable, we can use this example as an opportunity to re-open the questions of ideal community, the features that have been called nature and culture, the relations of people to themselves and others, the forms of built and unbuilt environment we value – in other words, a range of questions that are central to the formulation of politics in the image of the *polis*, including the idea of a resolution between nature and culture. By raising these issues as questions rather than claiming particular configurations of them as solutions, we are able to become explicit about the politics involved in the relationship between community and authority, security and truth.

19: A SMALL CONCLUSION

If sprawl does indeed represent both immediate problems in the organization of built communities and conceptual problems in how we describe, analyze, and authorize these and other community forms, then paradoxically the desire to impose a solution must be resisted. While I have claimed that sprawl in the Okanagan is a political problem, the story that I have told to elaborate this claim makes it clear that ending with the suggestion of a solution to sprawl would only perpetuate the problems that I have sought to clarify. How, then, do I end this story in a way that acknowledges both the seriousness of the political problems of sprawl and the seriousness of the problems with our obsession with political solutions, with politics as solutions?

It is impossible to say whether the concerns for ideal community and metaphysical security are essential to human existence; this is a bigger and older question than I am able to answer. It is perhaps even undesirable to attempt to make a definitive claim one way or the other, as such a claim would contribute to the construction of one possibility over the other. However, it is possible to say that the (meta-) discourse of ideal community and metaphysical security has been a contributing structure of thinking about politics in the Western world for at least as long as this brief sketch has been able to consider. It may or may not be inescapable; it certainly is operative, and it is obviously extremely powerful. The construction of politics as an intersection of ideal community, security, and authority is therefore one that analysts of politics in the contemporary world need to understand. The specific problems of suburban sprawl in the Okanagan are here now, and then the problem of built community in this particular place will change, or so

the dynamics of problems and solutions would suggest. However, this same analysis suggests that the problem of how the problem of politics is constructed through these meta-discourses will likely continue to be refigured and reconstructed by proposed solutions to contemporary problems. Without a better understanding of this powerful, dynamic discourse, attempts to approach the problem of sprawl in the Okanagan as the search for solutions will surely only give it further support.

As one caught by the sense of irretrievable loss when witnessing the current changes in the Okanagan Valley – and thus as one firmly embedded within this discourse of the desire for metaphysical security – it is painful to have to observe that the desire to find a solution to what is identified, but only ever by some, as the problem with sprawl in the Okanagan, is itself a manifestation of the problems that generate sprawl. The identification of the problem is contested; it is a claim to authority in its own right, certainly. Yet in contextualizing this one problematic site within the conceptual and material constructions of community, security, authority, and politics that have driven the dynamic of problems and solutions, perhaps the discourse of the *polis* can be intervened upon in ways that open new possibilities both for the here and now of the Okanagan Valley and for the construction of politics in all its diverse spaces, forms, and practices. The first step, though almost sickeningly small and slow, has been to begin to make these discursive constructions more readily apparent.

NOTES

[1] All areas of significant size will be given in hectares, as the standard metric measurement. Measures of real estate lots will be given in acres, as this is evidently the industry standard. Measurements contained within quotes will be left in their original form. The conversion from hectare to acre is 1 ha = 2.47 acre, or 1 acre = 0.40 ha.

[2] Population statistics from BC Statistics census data: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/estspop.asp

[3] "Greenfield" is a term that refers to "vacant land that has never been developed or was formerly occupied by farms or low-density development that left the land free of environmental contamination. Greenfield sites are typically located in suburban or ex-urban areas and are much less costly to develop than are the brownfield sites often located in urban areas" (http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/cwp/glossary/glossary.php).

[4] "The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. Farming is encouraged and non-agricultural uses are controlled. The ALR covers approximately 4.7 million hectares. It includes private and public lands that may be farmed, forested or vacant land. Some ALR blocks cover thousands of hectares while others are small pockets of only a few hectares. In total, the ALR comprises those lands within BC that have the potential for agricultural production. The Agricultural Land Reserve takes precedence over, but does not replace other legislation and bylaws that may apply to the land. Local and regional governments, as well as other provincial agencies, are expected to plan in accordance with the provincial policy of preserving agricultural land. The Agricultural Land Commission Act sets the legislative framework for the establishment and administration of the agricultural land preservation program" (http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/alr_main.htm). The ALR is a contentious program, and requests to add or remove land from the Reserve are often hotly debated.

[5] The current floating bridge over Okanagan Lake has three lanes for vehicle traffic, with the centre lane variable depending on traffic flows. It has a liftable centre span to allow marine traffic through. A new bridge, named after former BC premier William R. Bennett, is currently under construction. It will have five lanes for vehicle traffic and will be elevated to allow for marine traffic to pass. The capital project is valued by the Province of British Columbia at $143,800,000.

[6] According to the City of Kelowna, in 1995 there were 782 new residential units built (423 as single-dwelling, 356 as multiple dwelling), while by 2004 that grew to 1976 units (871 single-dwelling versus 1066 multiple-dwelling), (City of Kelowna, 2005: 16). A BC Stats summary of British Columbia Housing Starts for Urban Areas and Communities, compiled using data from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, provides a stark picture. As examples, the Greater Kelowna area (including Kelowna, Peachland, Lake Country, and other smaller communities) recorded 736 new house starts in 1986. This jumped quickly to 2, 248 starts in 1989 and stayed at about 2,000 new starts until the early 1990s. It dipped below 1000 starts/year in 1998 – 2000, but by 2005 was back at 2,755 starts. Total housing starts in the twenty-year period were over 33,000. In the Greater Vernon area (Vernon, Coldstream, Lumby, and other small communities), there were 149 starts in 1986, a high point of around 800 starts per year in the early 1990s, a swing back down to around 200 starts per year at the start of 2000, and steady climb back up to over 400 starts per year by 2005. Total starts in this area for the period

were over 8,000. Finally, for the Greater Penticton area, there were 133 housing starts in 1986, climbing to over 600 starts/year in the early 1990s, stabilizing around 200 starts/year through the late nineties, and then climbing again to 400 starts in 2005. Total starts in this area were nearly 7,000. (Province of British Columbia, 2006: 2, 4).

[7] Designated "Village Centres" in the Kelowna Official Community Plan (http://www.city.kelowna.bc.ca/CM/Page357.aspx) include North Mission/Kettle Valley (no bus service), Black Mountain (two buses per day, none on Sundays), and Dilworth Mountain in Glenmore (every 40-50 minutes on weekdays, 5 buses Saturday, 3 Sunday). Other residential communities outside of both designated village centres and transit service include Glenmore/Clifton and McKinley in north Kelowna, and Southeast Kelowna.

[8] Bruegmann in particular emphasizes suburban development as a result of the convergence of the individual choices of millions of people (Bruegmann, 2005: 224-225).

[9] Bruegmann (2005) contests this common characterization, instead linking sprawl as an urban phenomenon to cities that reach a certain degree of affluence and inhabitants with a degree of choice in their living conditions. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to consider the forms of urban and suburban development in Europe, and even more so in the intensively populated areas of so much of the world. I will restrict myself to considering the specific context of the Okanagan Valley, and to the academic literature on sprawl, most of which comes from Britain and the United States. Unfortunately, there are not many analyses that consider the specific characteristics of sprawl in Canada.

[10] Though not necessarily only in North America.

[11] It is far beyond the scope of the present work to include a detailed analysis of the shift in political thinking from the *polis* to the modern state. It will briefly sketch some of the most relevant changes in thinking about the *polis* as well as about nature and culture, because how this shift occurs and the changes in thinking that enabled it and arose out of it, are crucial to understanding contemporary sprawl. While initial attempts to understand this wider context are suggested throughout this work, they are necessarily undeveloped sketches of what would ideally be far more detailed investigations.

[12] Please refer to figure 1, page vi, for a map with indications of the approximate locations of these developments. Quotes from corporate websites are identified by page name rather than page number. A full list of web page names with associated URLs is provided in the bibliography.

[13] According to the price list on the website, the cost of these lots ranges from $200,000 for approximately 0.4 acres, to over $700,000 for lots ranging from 0.6 – 1.5 acres. As of April 2006, only ten of the 69 lots are still unsold.

[14] According to the pricing list, the single-family lots still available for purchase range in price from $144,000 to $172,000 (lot sizes are not specified).

[15] The one major exception is the Lavington Mill, owned and operated by Tolko Industries Ltd., a Vernon-based forestry company.

[16] The importance of these promotional websites cannot be overstated. Early in the research for this paper, the Whisper Ridge website stuck out as being remarkably awkward, unattractive, and unprofessional, given the scale of the development and the value of the lots on offer. Since then, the website has been totally redesigned, and much of the content rewritten; it now appears as a sleek, persuasive, and visually attractive package.

[17] This sort of idealization is evident, for example, in the Smart Growth BC case study of Kelowna, where the development of hillsides is criticized because "[t]hese areas are steep and do not lend themselves to intensive development, employment uses, institutional services or walking" (Smart Growth BC 2004: 44), all of which are implicit prioritizations of the functions and characterizations of the city centre.

[18] Gillham (2001) makes this statement about the American context, but it is perhaps even more applicable to the Canadian context, where there are fewer traditional, high-density urban centres and more recently growing cities for whom the majority of residential and business construction as followed the post-war model.

[19] Eight months after this article was published, Sean Harvey resigned after being found guilty of misusing his municipal expense account. The *Vancouver Sun* reported that he used the account "to spend thousands of dollars on personal items such as restaurant meals and out-of-town trips." This article quotes his widely reported press conference, where he admitted that "I have misused my expense account, and when confronted about it, out of fear, I lied." According to the same article, Harvey initially said that "he used false names on his receipts to protect the identity of potential investors with whom he dined." A Vernon resident is quoted in this article as saying that "[Harvey] was basically looked at as a mayor who got a lot of things functioning again in the North Okanagan…He's perceived as the person who brought a lot of development. A lot of capital projects were started under his mayorship" (Chu, 2005).

[20] We start with Plato and Aristotle not because they were necessarily dominant thinkers in their time – there were certainly other ancient Greek writers who grappled with the problem of human community in increasingly complex forms of association – but because of their primacy in later lines of thought. Their explicit articulations of ideal community as the *polis* continue to structure medieval, modern, and contemporary concepts of politics. The differences in their conceptualizations of the *polis* are instructive, in part because they force us to remember that the notion of the *polis* – and therefore of community and politics in the idealized city – was from the start a contested entity, and in part because Plato and Aristotle formed the foundational assumptions, the two major world views, to which modern thought responded and from which it fought to extricate itself.

[21] *The Republic* is the standard English translation for the Greek title *Politeia*, which includes the meanings of: condition and rights of a citizen, citizenship; the daily life of citizens; a citizen body; and a civil polity or constitution of a state (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?layout.reflang=greek;layout.refembed=2;layout.refwordcount=1;layout.reflookup=politei%2Fa;doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3D%2384506)

[22] This focus on conscious rationality has been linked to the profound transformation that occurred as a result of the transition from aural/oral culture to written culture. According to Havelock (1982), this shift created a change in the possibility of thinking abstractly, no longer needing to rely on the poetic

mnemonic techniques and therefore freeing the mind to follow trains of thought and not have to worry about remembering logical connections, theoretical definitions, and so on. This transformation includes, Havelock suggests, a change of the role of the body in thinking, remembering, and understanding, as aural culture requires rhythm, trance, movement, and public performance, while reading and writing requires a shift into the head and into isolation, at least in an immediate sense.

[23] It is possible that Plato recognizes this impossibility, as is seen by the separation in the end of *The Republic* between the worldly constitution that cannot be secured and the individual constitution that can be modeled on heaven even in the absence of the ideal communal constitution. In this move, Plato comes close to divorcing the parallel between the individual and city; however, he is unwilling to let go of the metaphysical, universal forms on which his political/philosophical thought rests. Thus, in the end, both the city and the individual are subject to the same threat of material embodiment (Book X makes clear that philosophical learning in the individual will still be undermined by the physical embodiment of the soul in its next incarnation).

[24] This of course can only be a sketch of what would be a much larger project leading to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the *polis* and sprawl.

[25] This history of debate and change is the focus of other writers, such as Alexandre Koyré (1957) and Hannah Arendt (1958), and more recently Karsten Harries (2001), who analyze the changes in these concepts from the "ancient" to the "modern" world. Each author tells the story of the development of the distinctly modern way of thinking as a connected series of developments in science, philosophy, and politics (which at the same time is the series of developments that led to clear distinctions between practices of science, philosophy, and politics). While all recognize the same basic events and figures, they present different interpretations of their significance and meaning. Among them, however, they deal with the same series of tensions that are suggested here as being of primary concern to the ancient Greeks – nature and culture, bodies and rationality, physical phenomena and metaphysical truth, mortality and eternity – and demonstrate how attempts to understand and resolve these tensions were crucial in shaping the "modern" era.

[26] James Gleick, in his biography of Isaac Newton (2003), describes Newton's early fascination with notions of the "infinitesimal," the infinitely "small increment or moment of time" that was the necessary counterpart to thinking about the universe as infinitely large. He explains Newton's work on the infinitesimal as a process of integrating algebra and geometry in pursuit of the problem of motion: "As algebra melded with geometry, so did a physical counterpart, the problem of motion. Whatever else a curve was it naturally represented the path of a moving point. …To think that way was to think kinetically. …Newton wrestled with this as a problem of words: swifter, slower; least distance, least progression; instant, interval. …A culture lacking technologies of time and speed also lacked basic concepts that a mathematician needed to quantify motion. …A geometrical task matched a kinetic task: to measure curvature was to find a rate of change. …Newton saw this system whole: that problems of tangents were the inverse of problems of quadrature; that differentiation and integration were the same act, inverted. The procedures seem alien, one from the other, but what one does, the other undoes. That is the fundamental theorem of the calculus, the piece of mathematics that became essential knowledge for building engines and measuring dynamics. Time and space – joined. *Speed* and *area* – two abstractions, seemingly disjoined, revealed as cognate" (Gleick, 2003: 42-45; emphases in original).

[27] This split is, of course, most obviously traced to René Descartes. However, its prevalence as a basis of the modern resolution of nature and culture in the state (abstracting from the material body while

embodying the community as the body politic) is also evident as recently as Karsten Harries' modernist revision: "[o]f primary importance to the argument of this book is the claim that human beings transcend themselves as embodied selves; that, transcending themselves, they discover within themselves a ground of reason that is also the ground of nature; and that having gained this ground, they can also hope to gain at least some measure of control over those natural forces to which they are subject" (Harries, 2001: 207).

[28] In choosing and analyzing alternatives to sprawl in the Okanagan, I have focussed on developments that still function within the suburban paradigm of development. The effort to include Smart Growth principles into municipal planning is another key area where alternatives to sprawl are being debated; however, staying within the initial description of the solutions to the city taking the form of either the garden city or the revitalized city centre, I've chosen to restrict this consideration of alternatives to other efforts to solve the problem of sprawl within the garden city model.

[29] In the time between doing the research and writing of this paper and submitting it for defense, The Rise also completely redesigned and rewrote their advertising website. All quotes are from the previous site, and page references are to the page titles of the previous site. This site is no longer available on-line; therefore, in the bibliography, the URL is given only for the main page of the new site. Hard copy images of the old site are available upon request.

[30] "The CHBA National SAM Awards honour the peak performance of new home builders, renovators, residential developers, and new home sales and marketing professionals across Canada, recognizing: excellence in new homes and renovation design; distinctive community development; innovative technology and construction techniques; and outstanding marketing and sales activities" (http://www.chba.ca/SAMS; accessed June 15, 2006).

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Highpointe, Kelowna.
Website: (July 1, 2006; due to the construction of this website, the URL remains the same for many pages, which therefore can only be reached by navigating through the home page)

Opening: http://www.highpointeland.com/
Home: http://www.highpointeland.com/main.html
Breathing Space: The View
Breathing Space: Introduction
Living Space: Philosophy
Living Space: Entrance
Living Space: Home Styles
Play Space: Activities
Play Space: Local Area Map
Your Space: Inventory
Your Space: Site Map
Your Space: Directions
News: http://www.highpointeland.com/news1.html

Print Advertisements:
"Beauty you can come home to." In *The Capital News* (Kelowna, B.C.), A27, Friday October 7, 2005.
"Nature is calling you home." In *The Globe and Mail* (B.C. Edition), A10-A11, Saturday July 16, 2005.

The Lakes, Lake Country.
Website: (July 1, 2006)

Home: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/main.html
About The Lakes: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/home.html
Master Plan: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/plan.htm
Photo Gallery: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/gallery.htm
The Developer: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/developers.htm
Directions: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/aboutlocation.html
Pricing and Availability: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/price_avail.htm
Living in Lake Country: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/live_in_lakes.htm
Things to Do: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/things_to_do.htm
Okanagan Map: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/location.htm
News Articles: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/newsarticles.htm
News Editorial: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/newsarticles.htm
Contact: http://www.the-lakes.ca/pages/contactUs.htm

The Rise, Vernon.
Website: (redesigned July 1, 2006; all URLs here are to the new site, which was not available when the initial research and writing was being done. The old site is no longer available on-line.)

Home: http://www.therise.ca/
Location: http://www.therise.ca/location.shtml
Vernon: http://www.therise.ca/location-vernon.shtml
Golf Club: http://www.therise.ca/golfclubattherise.shtml
Winery: http://www.therise.ca/wine.shtml
Recreation: http://www.therise.ca/recreation.shtml
Beach Club: http://www.therise.ca/recreation-beachClub.shtml
Real Estate: http://www.therise.ca/realestate.shtml
Master Plan: http://www.therise.ca/realestate-masterplan.shtml
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The Village of Kettle Valley, Kelowna.
Website: (July 1, 2006)

Home: http://www.kettlevalley.com, http://www.kettlevalley.com/index.php
Our Village: http://www.kettlevalley.com/ourvillage.php
In the News: http://www.kettlevalley.com/news.php
Photo Gallery: http://www.kettlevalley.com/gallery/index.php
Homes and Homesites: http://www.kettlevalley.com/homesite.php
Builders: http://www.kettlevalley.com/builders.php
Awards: http://www.kettlevalley.com/awards.php
Location: http://www.kettlevalley.com/location.php
About Kelowna: http://www.kettlevalley.com/aboutkelowna.php
Contact Us: http://www.kettlevalley.com/contactus.php

On-line Newsletters:

Summer 2004: http://www.kettlevalley.com/VillageViewJune2004.pdf
Winter 2004/2005: http://www.kettlevalley.com/VillageView.pdf
Summer 2005: http://www.kettlevalley.com/summer2005newsletter.pdf

Whisper Ridge, Vernon.
Website: (July 1, 2006)

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Site Plan: http://www.whisperridge.com/site_plan/index.html
Awards: http://www.whisperridge.com/awards/index.html
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Contact Us: http://www.whisperridge.com/contact/index.html

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December 2002: http://www.whisperridge.com/newsletter/whisper3.pdf
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April 2003: (File damaged; cannot be loaded)
May 2003: http://www.whisperridge.com/newsletter/may03.pdf
June 2003: http://www.whisperridge.com/newsletter/jun03.pdf
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Home: http://www.wilden.ca/
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Geothermal: http://www.wilden.ca/geothermal.htm
Location: http://www.wilden.ca/location.htm
Kelowna and Area: http://www.wilden.ca/kelowna_area.htm
Amenities: http://www.wilden.ca/maps/lifestyle.htm
About Us: http://www.wilden.ca/about.htm
About the Develop and Staff: http://www.wilden.ca/about_developer.htm
Estates and Lots: http://www.wilden.ca/estates_lots.htm
Lifestyle: http://www.wilden.ca/lifestyles.htm
Kelowna: http://www.wilden.ca/kelowna.htm
Winter Outdoor Activities: http://www.wilden.ca/winter.htm
Summer Outdoor Activities: http://www.wilden.ca/summer.htm
Culture: http://www.wilden.ca/culture.htm
Updates and Press: http://www.wilden.ca/news.php
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